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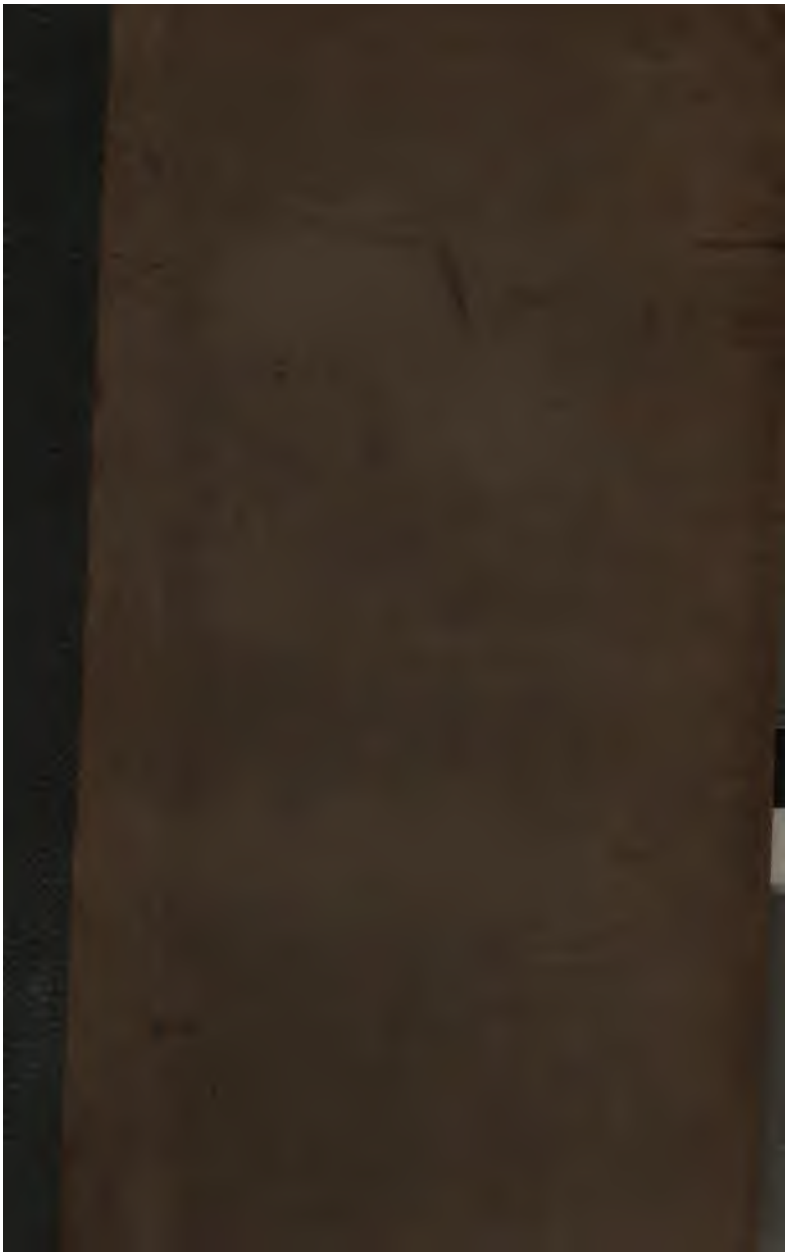

y in his pocket, said to me, with tears
l with a wild air, "My friend, I am a
! undone! I am pursued, and you must
similar to your own. If you want it, I
lenty of money, and we will start for
gether. I know your skill at escapes,
u only can extricate me."

cement did not place me upon a seat
ady much embarrassed myself, I did
to place myself again in the way of
ded, and to unite my fortunes with
hotly pursued might lead to my detec-
oning, which I made to myself, decided
ry with Villedieu; and besides, as yet
y exactly what he wished to do. At
n him spending much more than his
ng and handsome officer has so many
g money, that no one thinks any harm
hen greatly astonished at the following

peak to you of those circumstances in
eceded your acquaintance with me; it
ay, that as brave and intelligent as
d with good interest, I found myself,
rty-four, a captain of chasseurs, when
le, at the Café de la Montagne. There
I an individual whose honest appear-
d me in his favour, and our intimacy
close a friendship that he introduced
e. It was one replete with comfort
I I received every attention and token
ood a fellow was M. Lemaire, so
an was madame Lemaire. A jeweller,
with his articles of trade, he made
s of six or eight days; but still I vi-
d you may guess that I soon became
aire did not perceive, or would not
d, to be sure, a most agreeable life,
ng I found Josephine in tears. Her

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A Collection

OF THE

MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING

LIVES

EVER PUBLISHED,

WRITTEN BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES.

WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS SEQUELS CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOLUME XXV.—VIDOCQ.

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MEMOIRS

OF

VIDOCQ,

PRINCIPAL AGENT OF THE FRENCH POLICE

UNTIL 1827:

AND NOW PROPRIETOR OF

THE PAPER MANUFACTORY AT ST MANDÉ.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

"Le plus grand fleau est l'homme qui provoque. Quand il n'y a point de provocateurs ce sont les forts qui commettent les crimes, parceque ce ne sont que les forts qui les conçoivent. En police, il vaut mieux ne pas faire d'affaire que d'en créer."

MEMOIRES, VOL. I.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON, 1828:

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

INTRODUCTION.

To attempt an analysis of the Memoirs now laid before the public would be utterly impossible, so romantic are the narratives, so thrilling the horrors, so powerful the descriptions, so continuous the thread of its history. As a piece of Autobiography, it has many and singular characteristics, which stamp it at once as one of the most interesting and peculiar narratives ever penned, replete with astonishing incident and instructive moral. In these days, when the hand of improvement, so called, (God save the mark!) macadamizes the hoary relics of antiquity to smoothen the path along which civilization progresses; when the age of chivalry is gone; and daring deeds and adventurous

exploits are superseded by mere common-places and matter-of-fact details; it is a thing of marvel to read the incidents of a life so full of romance, so teeming with the wild and wonderful. To the light reader, who but skims over the surface of a book, and enjoys the tale merely as one of passing amusement, forgotten soon as read, these Memoirs offer all that the most fastidious can desire of the piquant and attractive: to the reflective reader, who, not content with the mere detail of events, inquires into causes, searches out motives, and philosophizes, *en passant*, on the wit or weakness, power or puerility, of the human mind, herein will be found ample scope and verge enough for his most meditative musings.

As a work of fiction, it would be said, and with apparent justice, that the Author had drawn too largely on his inventive powers, that he had exceeded the bounds of possibility, and set no limits to the excursions of his fancy; but "*le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable;*" and independently of the assertions of Vidocq himself as to the veracity of his Memoirs, we have other

powerful inducements to credit his statements. Many of the persons whom he has handled with severity, and spoken of in no very measured terms, are still living, and would doubtless be too happy to refute the charges alleged, did not truth forbid denial. Of his wonderful and multiplied escapes from "durance vile," we are equally assured, as no man in his senses would give fictitious descriptions of what could be readily disproved if false; and a similar argument may be applied to other seemingly overwrought narrations; but so many of them tell *against* our hero, that their truth cannot be impugned. Perhaps no man in his time ever assumed so many parts in life's drama, and so frequently on the very shortest possible notice, as EUGENE FRANÇOIS VIDOCQ. But too early initiated in deception, he soon became an adept in dissimulation, and expert in disguising his person or his intentions. Endued with a mind powerful but perverted, a temper careless but impetuous, and feelings kindly but irritable, he, by the early association with depraved companions, rendered himself, by one false step,

induced by a too ready compliance, an outcast, excluded from the pale of orderly society, and condemned to herd with the very refuse of mankind. Much may be urged in his defence, who, suffering under the penalty of a sentence, the result of perjured evidence, sought to escape the contamination which beset him in the recesses of his prison only to establish himself respectably; who, having lost caste amongst his fellow citizens, sought eagerly the means of re-instatement. But no sooner were respectable connexions formed, credit established, affections nourished, or hopes entertained, than some fortuitous and evil occurrence dashed the cup of anticipated happiness and security from his lips, leaving but the bitterness of the dregs to swallow, and thus again was he

> ——— Like ocean weed uptorn,
> And loose along the world of waters borne;
> Thus cast companionless from wave to wave
> On life's rough sea.

With a mind not naturally vicious, he was again and again condemned to mate with the most abandoned; with feelings not callous, he

was compelled to harbour with the most hardened; with a yearning after a life of honest labour, he was coupled with villains whose conduct was one tissue of impious blasphemy, atrocious rascality, and unutterable bestiality. To escape this there was but one only course open to him, and that he adopted. He offered his services to the police, who, aware of his talent, acuteness, activity, and courage, accepted his proferred aid. This did not result from a fear of danger or a spirit of treachery; the urgent motives that led VIDOCQ to this measure, were the desire of avoiding the perpetual contact with the vile scum with with whom his lot was cast, and the knowledge that he could benefit his country, and thus pay recompense for past misconduct. Above all he could then enjoy liberty and have before him the encouraging prospect of a re-instatement in society, which, lost to him by one early and precipitous step, was to be recovered by years of suffering and daring, open obloquy and secret approval. Much was ventured, for much was to be achieved.

We shall give a brief narrative of our hero,

and leave our readers to form their own decision on his eventful life.

Eugene François Vidocq was a native of Arras, where his father was a baker: and from early associations he fell into courses of excess which led to the necessity of his flying from the paternal roof. After various, rapid, and unexampled events in the romance of real life, in which he was everything by turns and nothing long, he was liberated from prison, and became the principal and most active agent of police. He was made Chief of the Police de Sureté under Messrs Delavau and Franchet, and continued in that capacity from the year 1810 till 1827, during which period he extirpated the most formidable of those ruffians and villains to whom the excesses of the revolution and subsequent events had given full scope for the perpetration of the most daring robberies and iniquitous excesses. Removed from employment, in which he had accumulated a handsome independence, he could not determine on leading a life of ease, for which his career of perpetual vigilance and adventure had unfitted him, and he built

a paper-manufactory at St Mandé, about two leagues from Paris, where he employs from forty to fifty persons,—principally, it is asserted, liberated convicts, who having passed through the term of their sentence, are cast upon society without home, shelter, or character, and would be compelled to resort to dishonest practices did not this asylum offer them its protection and afford them opportunity of earning an honest living by industrious labour.

One additional point of interest in the present volumes is, that the author is still living. The criticism on autobiography falls harmless when the hand that penned it is mouldering with its kindred dust; and in the present instance the shafts of severe comment will be blunted on the shield of candid and contrite avowal.

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PREFACE.

VIDOCQ TO THE READER.

It was in the month of January 1828, that I finished these Memoirs, of which it was my wish to direct the publication personally. Unfortunately, in the month of February I broke my right arm; and as it was fractured in five places, it was thought that amputation must ensue. For more than six weeks my life was in danger, and I was in the most racking agonies. In this distressing situation I was scarcely in condition to re-write my manuscript, and give it the finishing touches: but I had sold it, and the bookseller was anxious to publish, and offered me a reviser. Deceived by the recommendation of a writer well spoken of in the literary world, to perform a work, which under no other circumstances would I have trusted to other hands, he introduced to me one of those pretended men of letters, whose excessive impudence conceals their stupidity, and who had no other object in view than to make money. This pretended literatus boasted so much of his individual

merits, that I was somewhat suspicious; but he was backed by so respectable an introduction, that I rejected all suspicion as unjust, and agreed to avail myself of his aid until I was convalescent. This worthy ran over the manuscript; and, after a superficial glance to show his ability, he declared, according to custom, that there was a great deal to revise and correct. The bookseller also, according to custom, believed his assertion, and I was persuaded of this truth also; and, like so many others who do not boast of it, I had got hold of a botcher.

Certainly there was much to alter in my style: I knew nothing of the forms of literary style, but yet I had some method; I knew that tautology was to be avoided; and if I was not so good a grammarian as Vaugelas, either by intuitiveness or by habit, I could always avoid bad orthography. Vidocq writing at all correctly was perhaps an unlikelihood in the eyes of my censor, I know not, but this is the case:—

In July last, I went to Douai, to get a confirmation of the pardon granted me in 1818, and on my return I asked for the printed proofs of my Memoirs; and as my restoration to the rights of a citizen did not allow of my fearing any arbitrary injunctions from the authorities, I had proposed revising my manuscript, and including all relative to the police, so as to complete the information till then kept back.

What was my astonishment when, on reading the first volume and part of the second, I found that my compilation had been entirely altered;

and that, instead of a narrative developing perpetually the sallies, vivacity, and energy of my character, another had been foisted in, totally deprived of all life, colouring, or promptitude. With few alterations, the facts were nearly the same; but all that was casual, involuntary, and spontaneous, in a turbulent career, was given as the long premeditation of evil intent. The necessity that impelled me was altogether passed over; I was made the scoundrel of the age, or rather a Compere Mathieu, without one redeeming point of sensibility, conscience, remorse, or repentance. To crown my disgrace, the only motives that can justify some avowals of a candour somewhat uncommon, were not allowed to appear; I was only a shameless villain, who unblushingly united with the immorality of some of his actions the desire of narrating them. To lessen me still more, a language was attributed to me of the most puerile sort. I really felt myself humiliated with the details which the press had produced, and which I should certainly have obliterated, had I not relied on the revision of a man of judgment. I was shocked at the multitude of vicious conversations, long circumlocution, and prolix phrases, in which the ear, good sense, and syntax, were equally offended. I could not conceive how, with the total deficiency of talent, any person could assume the title of a literary man. But suspicions quickly arose, and in the suppression of certain names, which I was surprised not to find (that of my successor, Coco-Lacour, for instance), I thought I could trace the finger of the retired police, and

the traces of a transaction which my bookseller and myself had no wish should appear. Apparently, Delavau and Franchet, informed of my sad accident, which precluded me from superintending a publication which must disquiet them, had profited by the circumstance, to garble my Memoirs in such a way as to paralyze beforehand the effect of those discoveries on which they would have little cause for self-gratulation. All conjecture was fair: and I could only accuse the incapacity of my reviser; and as without vanity, I was more satisfied with my own prose than his, I begged him to terminate his labours.

It would seem that he had no objection,—but could he leave his post? He stated his bargain, and the commencement of his labours, by virtue of which he assumed a privilege of mutilating me at his pleasure, and to do what he pleased with me as long as he chose, if he received his "consideration." I had a much greater right to ask him for damages and recompense; but where there is neither cash nor honesty, what avails any demand of this nature? To lose no time in useless debate, I had back my manuscript, and payed its ransom under certain reservations, which I kept "in petto."

From this moment, I determined to destroy the pages in which my life and various adventures were mentioned without apology. A complete destruction was the surest method of overturning an intrigue, of which the plot was easily decyphered; but the first volume was ready, and the second far advanced. A total suppression would have been too considerable a sacrifice

for the bookseller; and, on the other hand, by a culpable breach of confidence, the pirate trafficking in a fraudulent manner, sold my Memoirs in London; and, inserted by extracts in the newspapers, they soon reached Paris, where they were given as translations. The theft was audacious; I do not hesitate to point out the author. I might prosecute him; his deeds shall not go unpunished. In the mean time, I thought it best to publish with all speed, to secure the bookseller, and that he might not be anticipated by a robbery unheard of in the literary world. Such an inducement was necessary to urge me to sacrifice all personal feeling: and it is because the consideration has been all powerful with me, that, contrary to my own interest and to satisfy the public impatience, I accept now as my own, a production which, at first, I would have rejected. In this text all is true; only the truth, as far as regards me, is told with too little carefulness, and without any of those precautions which a general confession requires, and by which every one will pass judgment on me. The principal defect is in a too careless disposition, for which I alone can complain. Some alterations have appeared indispensable, and I have made them. This explains the difference of tone which may be observed in comparing some parts of these Memoirs; but after my entering amongst the corsairs at Boulogne, it will be perceived that I have no longer an interpreter; no one has thence meddled or shall hereafter meddle with the task I have imposed on myself, of unfolding to the public all that can interest them. I speak, and

will speak, without reserve, without restriction, and with all the frankness of a man who has no longer cause for fear; and who, at last restored to the fulness of those rights of which he was unjustly deprived, aspires to the fullest exercise of them. If any doubts be created as to the reality of this intention, it is only necessary to refer my reader to the last chapter of my second volume, when he will have ample proof that I have the will and the power of keeping my word.

MEMOIRS OF VIDOCQ.

CHAPTER I.

My birth—Precocious disposition—I become a journeyman baker—The first theft—The false key—The accusing fowls—The stolen plate—Prison—Maternal clemency—My father's eyes opened—The finishing stroke—Departure from Arras—I seek a ship—The ship broker—The danger of idleness—The trumpet calls—M. Comus, first physician in the world—The preceptor of general Jacquot—The rope dancers—I enter the company—Lessons of the Little Devil—The savage of the South Seas—Punch and the Theatre of Amusing Varieties—A scene of jealousy, or the serjeant in the eye—I go into the service of a quack doctor—Return to my father's house—Acquaintance with an actor—Another chace—My departure in a regiment—The rash companion—Desertion—The raw Picardy soldier and the assignats—I go over to the enemy—A flogging—I return to my old standard—A domestic robbery, and the housekeeper of an old worthy—Two duels a day—I am wounded—My father a public functionary—I join the war—Change of regiment—Residence at Arras.

I was born at Arras; my continual disguises, the flexibility of my features, and a singular power of grimacing, having cast some doubt concerning my age, it will not be deemed superfluous to declare here, that I was brought into the world on the 23d of July 1775, in a house adjoining that in which Robespierre was born sixteen years before. It was night; the rain fell in torrents; the thunder growled; a relation, who combined the functions of midwife and fortune-teller, predicted that my career would be a stormy one. There were even then in the world some good people who believed in prognostications; now that the world

has become more enlightened, how many men, and those far from being old women, would bet on the infallibility of Miss Lenormand!

However that may be, we will presume that the sky was not troubled on my special account; and although there is always something very attractive in the marvellous, I am far from thinking that the turbulence of the elements had much reference to my birth. I had a most robust constitution, and there was plenty of me, so that as soon as I was born they took me for a child of two years of age; and I gave tokens of that athletic figure, that colossal form, which have since struck terror into the most hardened and powerful ruffians. My father's house being situated in the Place d'Armes, the constant resort of all the blackguards of the vicinity, I had my muscular powers early called into action, in regularly thrashing my comrades, whose parents were regularly complaining of me to my father and mother. At home nothing was talked of but torn ears, black eyes and rent garments; at eight years of age, I was the terror of all the dogs, cats, and children of the neighbourhood; at thirteen I handled a foil sufficiently well not to be defeated in an attack. My father perceiving that I associated chiefly with the military of the garrison, was alarmed for me, and desired me to prepare myself for the first receiving of the communion: two devotees undertook to prepare me for this solemn duty. God knows what fruit I have gathered from their lessons. I began at the same time to learn the trade of a baker, which was my father's business, in which he intended that I should succeed him, although I had an elder brother.

My employment principally consisted in carrying bread through the city. During my rounds I made frequent visits to the fencing-rooms, of which my parents were not long in ignorance; but the cooks all gave such testimony of my politeness and punctuality that they winked at this trifling prank. This went on

until they discovered a deficiency in the till, of which they never took away the key. My brother, who visited it in the same manner as myself, was detected in the very act, and sent off in a hurry to a baker at Lille. The day after this event, which had not been explained to me, I was about to explore, according to custom, the convenient drawer, when I perceived that it was carefully closed. The same day my father desired me to use more alacrity in my rounds, and to return at a certain hour. It was then evident that from this day forward I should be equally deprived of liberty and money. I bewailed this twofold calamity, and hastened to impart it to a comrade named Poyant, older than myself. As a hole was cut in the counter to drop the money through, he first advised me to introduce a feather dipped in glue; but this ingenious expedient only produced me very small pieces of money, and it became necessary for me to employ a false key, which was made for me by a blacksmith's son. I then dipped again into the chest, and we spent together the fruits of these pilferings at a public-house where we had established our head quarters. There assembled, attracted by the master of the house, a great many well-known rogues, and some unfortunate young fellows, who, to get replenished pockets, used the same expedient as myself. I soon joined the society of the most abandoned vagabonds of the country, Boudou, Delcroix, Hedon, Franchison, Basserie, &c., who initiated me into all their villanies. Such was the honourable society in the bosom of which I spent my leisure hours, until one day my father surprised me, as he had done my brother, took away my key, heartily thrashed me, and took such precautions as totally cut off all my hopes of ever again getting a dividend from the receipts therein deposited.

My only resource was now to take my tithes from the bakings. Occasionally I pilfered a loaf or two; but as in disposing of them I was compelled to sell

them very cheaply, I scarcely by their sale obtained sufficient to regale myself with tarts and honey. Necessity makes us active; I had an eye for everything; all was agreeable to me, wine, sugar, coffee, and liquors. My mother had never known her provisions to disappear so quickly, and perhaps would not have discovered so soon, but two chickens which I had resolved on disposing of to my own peculiar profit raised their voices to accuse me. Hid in my breeches pocket, and concealed by my baker's apron, they thrust out their heads and crowed; and my mother thus informed of their intended fate, came out to prevent it. She gave me several cuffs of the head, and sent me supperless to bed. I did not sleep a wink, and it was, I think, the evil spirit that kept me awake; all I know is, that I rose with the determination to lay hands on all the plate. One thing alone gave me uneasiness. On each piece the name of VIDOCQ was engraved in large letters. Poyant, to whom I broached the matter, overruled all difficulties; and the same day, at dinner time, I swept off ten forks and as many coffee spoons. Twenty minutes afterwards the whole was pawned, and the next day I had not a farthing left of the hundred and fifty francs which they lent me on them.

I did not return home for three days, and on the third evening I was arrested by two police officers, who conveyed me to the Baudets, a place in which mad persons are confined, together with those committed for trial, and the rogues of the district. I was kept in a dungeon for ten days without being told the cause of my arrest, and then the jailor told me that I had been imprisoned at the desire of my father. This information a little composed me: it was a paternal correction that was inflicted on me, and I accordingly judged that its continuance would not be rigorous. My mother came to see me the next day, and I was pardoned. Four days afterwards I was set at liberty, and I returned to work with a determination and

promise of henceforward conducting myself irreproachably. Vain resolve! I soon resumed my old habits, except extravagance; and I had excellent reasons for no more playing the prodigal, for my father, who had before been rather careless and regardless, now exercised a vigilance that would have done credit to the commandant of an advanced guard. If he left the post at the counter, my mother relieved guard; it was impossible for me to approach it, although I was constantly on the look out. This put me in despair. At last one of my tavern companions took pity on me; it was Poyant again, that thorough rogue, of whose abilities in this way the citizens of Arras may still preserve the memory. I confided my sorrows to his friendly bosom. "What," said he, "you are a precious fool to remain thus; and what a thing it is that a lad of your age should be ever short a farthing. Ah! were I in your place, I know what I should do."—"Well, what?"—"Your parents are rich, and a thousand crowns, more or less, would not hurt them. The old misers! they are fair game, and we must carry it off."—"I understand, we must grasp at once what we cannot get in detail."—"You're right; and then we will be off, neither seen nor known."—"Yes, but the police."—"Hold your tongue; are you not their son? and your mother is too fond for that." This consideration of my mother's love, united to the remembrance of her indulgence after my late freaks, was powerfully persuasive; I blindly adopted a project which smiled on my audacity; it only remained to put it in execution, and an opportunity was not long wanting.

One evening whilst my mother was at home alone, a confidant of Poyant came kindly to tell her, that engaged in a debauch with some girls, I was fighting everybody, and breaking and destroying everything in the house, and that if I were not stopped there would be at least a hundred francs to pay for the damage done.

At this moment my mother was seated in her chair knitting; the stocking dropped from her hand, she arose with haste, and ran with great alarm to the place of the pretended affray, which had been fixed on at the extremity of the city. Her absence could not be of long continuance, and we hastened to profit by it. A key which I had stolen from the old lady procured us admittance into the shop. The till was closed; I was almost glad to meet with this obstacle. I recalled the memory of my mother's love for me, not as an inducement to commit the act with impunity, but as exciting feelings of coming remorse. I was going to retire; Poyant held me, his infernal eloquence made me blush for what he called my weakness; and when he presented me with a crowbar, with which he had the precaution to provide himself, I seized it almost with enthusiasm; the chest was forced; it contained nearly 2,000 francs (upwards of 80*l.*) which we shared, and half an hour afterwards I was alone on the road to Lille. In the trouble which this affair threw me into, I walked at first very quickly, so that when I reached Lens I was much fatigued. A return chaise passed, into which I got, and in less than three hours arrived at the capital of French Flanders, whence I immediately started for Dunkirk, being excessively anxious to place myself beyond the reach of pursuit.

I had resolved on visiting the new world. My fate forbade this project. The port of Dunkirk was empty. I reached Calais, intending to embark immediately, but they asked me more than the whole sum in my possession. I was induced to hope that at Ostend the fare would be less; and on going there found the captains not more reasonable than at Calais. Thus disappointed I fell into that adventurous disposition which induces us to throw ourselves voluntarily into the arms of the first enterprize that offers; and, I scarcely know why, I expected to meet with some good fellow who would take me on board his vessel

without being paid, or at least would make a considerable reduction in favour of my good appearance, and the interest which a young man always inspires. Whilst I was walking, full of this idea, I was accosted by a person whose benevolent appearance induced a belief that my vision was about to be realized. The first words he addressed to me were questions. He had learnt that I was a stranger; he told me that he was a ship-broker; and when he learnt the cause of my coming to Ostend, he offered his services. "Your countenance pleases me," said he, "I like an open face; there is in your features the air of frankness and joviality which I like, and I will prove it to you by procuring for you a passage for almost nothing." I spoke of my gratitude. "No thanks, my friend, that will be soon enough when your business is completed, which I hope will be soon; but surely you will be tired of waiting about in this manner?" I said that certainly I was not very much amused. "If you will accompany me to Blakemberg, we will sup there together, with some jolly fellows, who are very fond of Frenchmen." The broker was so polite, and asked me so cordially, that I thought it would be ungentlemanly to refuse, and therefore accepted his invitation. He conducted me to a house where some very agreeable ladies welcomed us with all that ancient hospitality which did not confine itself only to feasting. At midnight, probably—I say probably, for we took no account of hours—my head became heavy, and my legs would no longer support me; there was around me a complete chaos, and things whirled in such a manner, that without perceiving that they had undressed me, I thought I was stripped to my shirt in the same bed with one of the Blakembergian nymphs; it might be true, but all that I know is, that I soon fell soundly asleep. On waking I found myself cold; instead of the large green curtains which had appeared to me in my sleep, my heavy eyes only gazed on a forest of masts, and I heard the watchful cry which

only echoes in the sea-ports. I endeavoured to rise, and my hand touched a heap of cordage against which I was leaning. Did I dream, then, or had I dreamt the previous evening? I felt about, I got up, and when on my feet I found that I did not dream, and what was worse, that I was not one of the small number of those personages whom fortune favours whilst sleeping. I was half naked, and except two crowns and six livres, which I found in one of my breeches pockets, I was pennyless. It was then but too clear to me, as the broker had said, "my business had soon been done." I was greatly enraged, but what did that avail me? I was even unable to point out the spot where I had been thus plundered. I made up my mind and returned to the inn, where I had some clothes which remedied the deficiencies of my attire. I had no occasion to tell my misfortune to the landlord. "Ah, ah!" said he to me, as far off as he could see me, "here comes another. Do you know, young man, that you have got off well? You return with all your limbs, which is lucky when one gets into such a hornet's nest; you now know what a land shark is; they were certainly beautiful syrens! All pirates are not on the sea, you observe, nor all the sharks within it; I will wager that they have not left you a farthing." I drew my two crowns from my pocket to show them to the inn-keeper. "That will be," said he, "just enough to pay your bill," which he then presented. I paid it and took leave of him, without however quitting the city.

Assuredly, my voyage to America was deferred till the Greek calends, and the old continent was to be my lot; I was about to be reduced to the level of the lowest degrees of degraded civilization, and my future lot was the more uncertain and disquieting, as I had no present resources. At home I never wanted bread; and this inspired regret for my paternal roof; the oven, said I to myself, was always heated for me as well as for others. After these regrets, I ran over mentally

all that crowd of moral reflexions which people have thought to strengthen by clothing them in the garb of superstition:—"A bad action brings no good luck: ill acquired gains profit us nothing." For the first time I acknowledged from experience a mine of truth in these prophetic sentences, which perpetual predictions were more sure than the admirable Centuries of Michael Nostradamus. I was in the repenting mood, as may be believed from my situation. I calculated the consequences of my flight and its aggravating sequel, but these were but ephemeral feelings: it was written that I should not so soon be placed in the right way. The sea was open to me as a profession, and I resolved to betrothe myself to it, at the risk of breaking my neck thirty times a day, by climbing, for eleven francs a month, up the rigging of a ship. I was ready to enter like a novice, when the sound of a trumpet suddenly arrested my attention; it was not that of a regiment, but of Paillasse (Merry-Andrew) and his master, who, in front of a show bedecked with the emblems of an itinerant menagerie, was awaiting the mob, which never hisses the vulgar exhibitions. I saw the beginning; and whilst a large crowd was testifying its gratification by loud shouts of laughter, it occurred to me that the master of Paillasse might give me employment. Paillasse appeared to me a good fellow, and I was desirous of securing his protection; and as I knew that one good turn deserves another, when he got down from his platform, on saying "*follow the crowd*," thinking that he might be thirsty, I devoted my last shilling in offering him half a pint of gin. Paillasse, sensible of this politeness, promised instantly to speak for me, and as soon as our pint was finished, he presented me to the director. He was the famous Cotte-Comus; he called himself the first physician of the world, and in traversing the country, had united his talents to those of the naturalist Garnier, the learned preceptor of general Jacquot, whom all Paris saw in the square of the Fountains before and after the revolution. These

gentlemen had with them a troop of rope dancers, Comus, as soon as I appeared before him, asked me what I could do. "Nothing," said I. "In that case," said he, "they will teach you: there are greater fools than you, and then besides, you have not a clumsy appearance. We shall see if you have a taste for the stage; then I will engage you for two years; the first six months you shall be well fed, and clothed; at the end of that time you shall have a sixteenth of the profits; and the year following, if you are bright, I will give you a share like the others; in the mean time, my friend, I will find occupation for you."

Thus was I introduced, and then went to partake of the flock-bed of the obliging merry-andrew. At the break of day we were awakened by the sonorous voice of our master, who leading me to a kind of small room, said, whilst showing me the lamps and wooden chandeliers—"There is your employment, you must clean these and put them in proper order; do you understand? And afterwards you must clean out the cages of the animals, and brush the floors." I went about my job, which did not greatly please me: the tallow disgusted me, and I was not quite at my ease with the monkeys, who enraged to see a fool to whom they were not accustomed, made inconceivable efforts to tear my eyes out. But I yielded to iron necessity. My duty performed, I appeared before the director, who said that I was an apt pupil, and that if I was assiduous he would do something for me. I rose early, and was very hungry; it was ten o'clock, but no signs of breakfast were visible, and yet it was agreed that I should have bed and board. I was sinking from want, when they gave me a piece of brown bread, so hard, that being unable to get through with it, although gifted with sharp teeth and a famous appetite, I threw the greater portion amongst the animals. I was obliged to light up in the evening, and as, from want of practice, I did not evince in my occupation all possible dispatch, the director, who was a brute, administered to

me a slight correction, which he renewed the next and following days. A month had not elapsed before I was in a wretched condition; my clothes, spotted with grease and torn by the monkeys, were in rags; I was devoured by vermin; hard diet had made me so thin that no one would have recognised me; and then it was that there arose in all imaginable bitterness the regrets for my paternal home, where good food, soft bed, and excellent clothing were mine, and when I had no monkeys to make clean and feed.

I was in this mood, when one morning Comus told me that after due consideration he was convinced that I should make an admirable tumbler. He then placed me under the tuition of sieur Balmate, called the "little devil," with orders to train me. My master just escaped breaking my loins at the first bend which he compelled me to make. I took two or three lessons daily. In less than three weeks, I was able to execute with much skill the monkey's leap, the drunkard's leap, the coward's leap, &c. My teacher, delighted at my progress, took pains to forward me; a hundred times I thought that in developing my powers, he would dislocate my limbs. At length we reached the difficulties of the art, which became more and more complicated. At my first attempt at the grand fling I nearly split myself in two; and in the chair-leap I broke my nose. Bruised, maimed and tired of so perilous a business, I determined on telling Comus that I had no desire to become a vaulter. "Oh you do not like it," said he; and without objecting to my refusal gave me a sound thumping. I then left Balmate entirely and returned to my lamps.

Comus had given me up, and it was now for Garnier to give me a turn. One day, after having beaten me more than usual (for he shared that pleasing office with Comus) Garnier, measuring me from head to foot, and viewing with a marked delight the dilapidation of my doublet, through which my flesh was visible, said to me, "I like you; you have reached the point that

pleases me. Now, if you are obedient it remains with yourself to be happy: from to day you must let your nails grow; your hair is already of a sufficient length; you are nearly naked, and a decoction of walnut-tree leaves will do the rest." I did not understand what Garnier meant, when he called my friend Paillasse and desired him to bring the tiger skin and club. Paillasse obeyed—"Now," said Garnier, "we will go through the performance. You are a young savage from the South Seas, and moreover a cannibal; you eat raw flesh, the sight of blood puts you in a fury, and when you are thirsty, you introduce into your mouth flints which you crack; you utter only broken and shrill sounds, you open your eyes widely, your motions are violent; you only move with leaps and bounds: finally, take for your model the ourang-outang who is in cage number one." During this lesson, a jar full of small stones quite round was placed at my feet, and near it a cock which was tired with having its legs tied together; Garnier took it, and offered it to me, saying "Gnaw away at this." I would not bite it; he threatened me. I rebelled, and demanded to be released; to which he replied by a dozen cuffs of the ear. But he did not get off scot-free: irritated at this usage, I seized a stake, and should assuredly have knocked the naturalist on the head, if the whole troop had not fallen on me, and thrust me out at the door with a shower of blows from the fist and kicks of the feet.

Some days afterwards, I was at the same public house with a showman and his wife who exhibited puppets in the open street. We made acquaintance, and I found that I had inspired them with some feelings of interest. The husband pitied me for having been condemned to what he termed the society of beasts. He compared me with Daniel in the lions' den. We may see that he was learned, and intended for something better than to play 'Punch.' At a later period he superintended a provincial theatrical company, and perhaps superintends it still. I shall conceal

his name. The embryo manager was very witty, though his wife did not perceive it; he was very ugly, which she plainly perceived. She was one of those smart brunettes with long eyelashes, whose hearts are of most inflammable material, which deserve a better destiny than to light a fire of straw. I was young and so was the lady: she was only sixteen, her husband thirty-five. As soon as I found myself out of place, I went to seek this couple; it struck me that they would advise me correctly. They gave me some dinner and congratulated me in having dared to free myself from the despotic yoke of Garnier. "Since you are your own master," said the husband to me, "you had better accompany us: you will assist us; at least, when we are three in number we shall have no lost time between the acts; you will move the actors whilst Eliza goes round with the hat; thus the public will be attracted and not go off, and our profits will be more abundant. What say you, Eliza?" Eliza answered, that she would do in this respect all he might desire, and besides she entirely agreed with him; and at the same time gave me a look which bespoke that she was not displeased, and that we should soon understand each other. I accepted the new employ with gratitude, and at the next representation I was installed to my office. The situation was infinitely superior to that at Garnier's. Eliza, who, despite my leanness, had discovered that I was not so badly made as I was clothed, made a thousand secret advances, to which I was not backward in reply: at the end of three days she said she loved me. I was not ungrateful; we were happy and constantly together. At home, we only laughed, played and joked. Eliza's husband took all that for child's sport; when at work we were side by side under a narrow cabin, formed of four cloth rags, dignified by the splendid title of "Theatre of Amusing Varieties." Eliza was on the right of her husband, and I on her right hand, and filled her place when she was not there to superintend the exits and entrances. One Sunday the

play was in full representation, and there was a crowded audience round the stage. Punch had beaten everybody, and our master, having nothing more to do with one of his personages (the Serjeant of the Watch) wished it to be removed, and called for his assistant. We heard him not. "Assistant, assistant," he repeated with impatience, and at the third time turning round he saw us enfolding each other in a close embrace. Eliza, surprised, sought for an excuse, but the husband without listening cried out again, "Assistant," and thrust against his eye the hook which served to suspend the serjeant. At the same moment the blood flowed, the representation was interrupted, and a battle ensued between the two married people; the show was overturned, and we were exposed in the midst of a numerous crowd of spectators, from whom this scene drew a lengthened peal of applause and laughter.

This disaster again threw me on the wide world, without a home to shelter my head. If I had had a decent appearance I might have procured a situation in a respectable family, but my appearance was so wretched that no one would have anything to say to me. In my situation I had but one resource, that of returning to Arras: but then how to exist on the road? I was a prey to these perplexities, when a person passed near me whom I took by his appearance to be a pedlar. I entered into conversation with him, and he told me that he was going to Lille; that he sold powders, opiates, and elixirs, cut corns, relieved bunnions, and sometimes extracted teeth. "It is a good trade," added he, "but I am getting old, and want somebody to carry my pack; it is a stiff-backed fellow like you that I need, with a firm foot, and steady eye; so if you like we will tramp it together."—"Willingly," was my reply, and without any further stipulation, we went on our way together. After an eight hours' walk, night drew on, and we could scarcely see our way, when we halted before a wretched village inn."—"Here it is." said the itinerant doctor, knocking at the door.—"Who

is there?" cried a hoarse voice. "Father Godard with his pack," answered my guide; and the door immediately opening, we found ourselves in the midst of a crowd of pedlars, tinkers, quack-doctors, umbrella-venders, showmen, &c. who hailed my new master, and ordered a plate to be brought for him. I thought they would do me equal honor, and I was about to seat myself at table, when the host, striking me familiarly on the shoulder, asked me if I was not the mountebank of father Godard. "Who do you call a mountebank?" said I with astonishment. "The merry-andrew, then." I confess that, despite of the recent reminiscences of the menagerie, and the Theatre of Amusing Varieties, I felt mortified at such an appellation. But I had a devil of an appetite, and as I thought that supper would follow the interrogatory, and that, after all, my situation with father Godard had not been accurately defined, I consented to pass for his mountebank. On my answering, the host led me at once to a neighbouring spot, a sort of barn, where a dozen of fellows were smoking, drinking, and playing at cards. He said that they would send me in something to eat. Soon afterwards, a stout wench brought me in a mess in a wooden bowl, on which I feed with the utmost avidity. A loin of mutton was swimming in a sea of pot liquor with stringy turnips: I cleared the whole up in a twinkling. This done, I laid myself down with the other packmen's valets, on some piles of straw, which we shared with a camel, two muzzled bears, and a crowd of learned dogs. The vicinity of such bedfellows was not the most pleasing; but it was necessary to put up with it. I did not close my eyes, whilst all the others snored away most gloriously.

Father Godard paid for all, and however bad were the beds and the fare, as we drew near Arras, it was necessary that I should not quit him. At length we reached Lille, which we entered on a market day. By way of losing no time, father Godard went straight to the principal square, and desired me to arrange his table,

his chest, his vials and packets, and then proposed that I should go and announce his arrival round the place. I had made a good breakfast, and the proposition disgusted me: I could put up with acting with a dromedary, and carrying his baggage from Ostend to Lille, but to go round in parade, at ten leagues from Arras—No! I bade adieu to father Godard, and then set out towards my native city, of which the clock soon became visible. Having reached the foot of the ramparts, before the closing of the gates, I trembled at the idea of the reception I should meet with: one moment I was tempted to beat a retreat, but fatigue and hunger could not allow that; rest and food were vitally necessary: I wavered no longer, and ran towards my paternal roof. My mother was alone in the shop: I entered, and throwing myself at her feet, wept whilst I intreated her forgiveness. The poor old woman, who hardly recognised me, so greatly was I altered, was softened. She had not power to repulse me, and even appeared to have forgotten all. She reinstated me in my old chamber, after having supplied all my wants. But it was necessary to tell my father of my return. She did not feel courage to face his first bursts of anger: a priest of her acquaintance, the almoner of the regiment of Anjou, garrisoned at Arras, undertook to be the bearer of the words of peace; and my father, after having vowed fire and flames, consented to pardon me. I trembled lest he should prove inexorable, and when I learnt that he had yielded, I jumped for joy. The almoner brought the news to me, and followed it up with a moral application, which was no doubt very touching, but I do not remember a word of it; I only recollect that he quoted the parable of the Prodigal Son, which was in truth a history similar to my own.

My adventures had made some noise in the city; everybody was anxious to hear them from my own lips. But no one, except one actress of the Arras company, took more interest in them than two milliners of

the Rue de Trois Visages: I paid them frequent visits. However, the actress soon obtained the exclusive privilege of my attention, and an intrigue followed, in which, disguised as a young girl, I renewed at her house some scenes from the romance of Faublas. A sudden journey to Lille with my conquest, her husband, and a very pretty little maid servant, who passed me off for her sister, proved to my father that I had soon forgotten the troubles of my first campaign. My absence was not of long continuance: three weeks had scarcely elapsed, when, from want of money, the actress refused any longer to allow me to form part of the baggage. I returned quietly to Arras, and my father was confounded at the straightforward way with which I asked his consent to enter the army. The best he could do was to comply, which he did; and the next day I was clad in the uniform of the Bourbon regiment. My height, good figure, and skill in arms, procured for me an appointment in a company of chasseurs. Some old veterans took offence at it, and I sent two to the hospital in consequence, when I soon joined them myself, on being wounded by one of their comrades. This commencement gave me notoriety, and they took a malicious pleasure in reviewing my past adventures; so that at the end of six months, Reckless,—for they bestowed that name on me,—had killed two men and fought fifteen duels. In other respects I enjoyed all the pleasures of a garrison life. I mounted guard at the cost of some good shopkeepers, whose daughters took on themselves the charge of making me as comfortable as possible. My mother added to these liberalities, and my father made me an allowance; and besides I found means to run in debt: thus I really cut a figure, and scarcely felt anything of the troubles of discipline. Once only I was sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment because I had not answered to three summonses. I underwent my punishment in a dungeon beneath one of the bastions, where one of my comrades was shut up with me, a soldier

in the same regiment. He was accused of various robberies, which he had confessed. Scarcely were we alone when he told me the grounds of his detention. Doubtlessly the regiment would give him up, and this idea, joined to the dread of dishonouring his family, threw him into dispair. I pitied him, and seeing no remedy for so deplorable a case, I counselled him to evade punishment either by escape or suicide. He determined to try the former ere he resolved on the latter; and, aided by a young friend who came to visit me, I prepared all for his flight. At midnight two bars of iron were broken, and we conducted the prisoner to the ramparts, and then I said to him—"Go: you must either *jump or hang*." He calculated the height, and hesitating, determined rather to run the chance of his sentence than to break his legs. He was preparing to return to his dungeon: at a moment when he least expected it, we gave him a push over: he shrieked out whilst I bid him be silent. I then returned to my cell: when on my straw I tasted the repose which the consciousness of a good deed always brings. The next day, on the flight of my companion being discovered, I was questioned, and dismissed on saying that I knew nothing of the affair. Some years afterwards, I met this unfortunate fellow, who looked on me as his liberator. Since his fall he had been lame, but had become an honest man.

I could not remain eternally at Arras; war had been declared against Austria, and I set out with the regiment, and soon after was present at the rout of Marquain which ended at Lille by the massacre of the brave and unfortunate general Dillon. After this we were ordered against the camp at Maulde, and then in that de la Lune, when, with the *infernal army* under the command of Kellerman, I was engaged in the battle against the Prussians of the 30th of October. The next day I was made corporal of grenadiers: thereupon it became necessary to baptise my worsted lace, and I acquitted myself with much credit at the

drinking booth, when I know not how or why, I quarrelled with the serjeant-major of the regiment which I had just left. An honourable meeting, which I proposed, was agreed upon, but when on the ground my adversary pretended that the difference from rank would not allow of his measuring weapons with me. I sought to compel him by violence, he went to make complaint of me, and the same evening I was, together with my second, placed under arrest. Two days afterwards we were informed that we were to be tried by court-martial, and thereupon determined to desert. My comrade in his waistcoat only, with a cap on his head, like a soldier about to undergo punishment, walked before me, who had on a hairy cap, my knapsack, and musket, at the end of which was a large packet sealed with red wax, and inscribed "To the citizen commandant of the quarters at Vitry-le-Français." This was our passport, and we reached Vitry in safety, and procured citizens' habits from a Jew. At this period the walls of every city were covered with placards, in which all Frenchmen were invited to fly to the defence of their country. At such a juncture the first comers were enrolled: a quarter-master of the 11th chasseurs received us, gave us our route, and we immediately started for the depôt at Philippeville.

My companion and self had but little cash, when fortunately a lucky windfall was in waiting for us at Châlons. In the same inn with us was a soldier of Beaujolais, who invited us to drink. He was an open-hearted countryman of Picardy, and as I conversed with him in the provincial dialect of his country, whilst the glass was circulating we grew such great friends, that he shewed us a portfolio filled with assignats, which he said he had found near Chateau-l'Abbaye. "Comrades," said he, "I cannot read, but if you will tell me what these papers are worth, I will give you a share." The Picard could not have asked any one better able to inform him, and in bulk he had much the greater quantity; but he had no suspicion that we had

retained in value nine-tenths of the sum. This little supply was not useless during the remainder of our journey, which we finished with much glee. Arrived at our place of destination, we had still enough left to keep the pot boiling. A short time afterwards we were sufficiently skilled in horsemanship to be appointed to one of the squadrons on service, and we reached the army two days before the battle of Jemmappes. It was not the first time that I had smelt powder, and I was no coward; indeed I had reason to know that I had found favour in the eyes of my officers, when my captain informed me, that having been discovered to be a deserter, I should be most certainly arrested. The danger was imminent, and that same evening I saddled my horse, intending to go over to the Austrians. I soon reached their out-posts; and on asking to be admitted, was incorporated at once with the cuirassiers of Kinski. What I most feared was lest I should be compelled next day to cross swords with the French, and I hastened to avoid any such necessity. A pretended illness enabled me to be left at Louvain, where after passing some days in the hospital, I offered to give the officers of the garrison lessons in fencing. They were delighted with the proposal, and supplied me with masks, gloves, and foils; and an assault, in which I disarmed two or three pretended German masters was enough to give them the highest opinion of my skill. I soon had many pupils, and reaped a good harvest of florins.

I was too much elated with my success, when at the end of a brisk attack on a brigadier, I was condemned to undergo twenty stripes of the cat, which, according to custom, were given to me on parade. This transported me with rage, and I refused to give another lesson. I was ordered to continue, with a choice of giving lessons or a fresh flogging. I decided on the former; but the cat annoyed me, and I resolved to dare all to escape from it. Being informed that a lieutenant was about to join the army under general

Schroeder, I begged to accompany him as his servant; to which he agreed, under the idea that I should make a St George of him; but he was mistaken, for as we approached Quesnoi I took French leave, and directed my journey towards Landrecies, where I passed for a Belgian who had left the Austrian banner. They wished me to enter a cavalry regiment, but the fear of being recognised and shot, if ever I should be brigaded with my old regiment, made me give the preference to the 14th light regiment (the old chasseurs of the barriers.) The army of the Sambre and Meuse was then marching towards Aix-la-Chapelle; the company to which I belonged received orders to follow it. We set out, and on entering Rocroi I saw the chasseurs of the 11th. I gave myself up for lost, when my old captain, with whom I could not avoid an interview, gave me courage. This worthy man, who had taken an interest in me ever since he had seen me, cut away amongst the hussars of Saxe-Teschen, told me that as an amnesty would henceforward place me out of the reach of all pursuit, he should have much pleasure in again having me under his order. I told him how glad it would make me; and he, undertaking to arrange the affair, I was once more reinstated in the 11th. My old comrades received me with pleasure, and I was not less pleased to find myself once again amongst them; and nothing was wanting to complete my happiness, when love, who is always busy, determined on playing me one of his tricks. It will not be thought surprising that at seventeen I captivated the housekeeper of an old gentleman. Manon, for that was her name, was near twice my age, but then she loved me very tenderly, and proved it by making every sacrifice to me unhesitatingly. I was to her taste the handsomest of chasseurs, because I was hers, and she wished that I should also be the most dashing. She had already given me a watch, and I was proudly adorned with various jewels, proofs of the love with

which I had inspired her, when I learnt that Manon was accused by her master of robbery. Manon confessed the fact, but at the same time, to assure herself that after her sentence I should not pass into another's arms, she pointed me out as her accomplice, and even asserted that I had proposed the theft to her. It had the appearance of probability, and I was consequently implicated, and should have extricated myself with difficulty if chance had not brought to light some letters of hers, which established my innocence. Manon, conscience-stricken, retracted. I had been shut up in the house of confinement at Stenay, whence I was set at liberty, and sent back as white as snow. My captain, who had never thought me guilty, was delighted at seeing me again; but the chasseurs could not forgive my being even suspected; and in consequence of various allusions and comments, I had no less than six duels in as many days. In the last I was badly wounded, and was conveyed to the hospital, where I remained for a month before I recovered. On going out, my officer, convinced that these quarrels would be renewed if I did not go away for a time, gave me a furlough for six weeks. I went to Arras, where I was much astonished to find my father in a public employment. As an old baker, he had been appointed to watch over the supplies of the commissariat. He opposed the distribution of bread at a time of scarcity; and this discharge of his duty, although he performed it gratis, was so offensive, that he would assuredly have been conducted to the guillotine had he not been protected by citizen (now lieutenant-general) Souham, commandant of the 2d battalion of Corrèze, into which I was temporarily drafted.

My furlough being out, I rejoined my regiment at Givet, whence we marched for the county of Namur. We were quartered in the villages on the banks of the Meuse; and as the Austrians were in sight, not a

day passed without some firing on both sides. At the termination of an engagement more serious than usual, we were driven back almost under the cannon of Givet; and in the retreat I received a ball in my leg, which compelled me to go again to the hospital, and afterwards to remain at the depôt; and I was there when the Germanic legion passed, principally composed of a party of deserters, fencing-masters, &c. One of the chief officers proposed that I should enter this corps, offering me the rank of quarter-master. "Once admitted," said he, "I will answer for you, you shall be safe from all pursuit." The certainty of not being asked for, joined to the remembrance of the disagreeables of my intimacy with Manon, decided me; I accepted the offer, and the next day was with the legion on the road to Flanders. No doubt, in continuing to serve in this corps, where promotion was very rapid, I should have been made an officer, but my wound opened afresh, with such bad symptoms, that I determined to ask for leave again, which on obtaining, I was six days afterwards once more at the gates of Arras.

CHAPTER II.

Joseph Lebon—The orchestra of the guillotine, and the reading of the bulletin—The aristocrat parrot—Citizeness Lebon—Address to the Sans Culottes—The apple-woman—New amours—I am imprisoned—The jailor Beaupré—The verification of the broth—M. de Bethune—I get my liberty—The sister of my liberator—I am made an officer—The quarters of St Sylvester Capelle—The revolutionary army—The retaking of a vessel—My betrothed—A disguise—The pretended pregnancy—I marry—I am content without being beaten—Another stay at the Baudets—My emancipation.

On entering the city, I was struck with the air of consternation which every countenance wore; some persons whom I questioned looked at me with contempt, and left me without making any reply. What extraordinary business was being transacted? Penetrating the crowd, which was thronging in the dark and winding streets, I soon reached the fish-market. Then the first object which struck my sight was the guillotine, raising its blood-red boards above the silent multitude. An old man, whom they had just tied to the fatal plank, was the victim; suddenly I heard the sound of trumpets. On a high place which overlooked the orchestra, was seated a man, still young, clad in a Carmagnole of black and blue stripes. This person, whose appearance announced monastic rather than military habits, was leaning carelessly on a cavalry sabre, the large hilt of which represented the Cap of Liberty; a row of pistols ornamented his girdle, and his hat, turned up in the Spanish fashion, was surmounted by a large tri-coloured cockade: I recognised Joseph Lebon. At this moment his mean countenance was animated with a horrid smile; he paused from beating time with his left foot; the trumpets stopped; he made a signal, and the old man was placed under the blade. A sort of clerk, half drunk, then appeared at the side of the "avenger of the people," and read with a hoarse

voice a bulletin of the army of the Rhine and Moselle. At each paragraph the orchestra sounded a chord; and when the reading was concluded, the head of the wretched old man was stricken off amidst shouts of "Vive la republique!" repeated by the satellites of the ferocious Lebon. I shall never forget, nor can I adequately depict the impression of this horrible sight. I reached my father's house almost as lifeless as the miserable being whose agony had been so cruelly prolonged; and then I learnt that he was M. de Mongon, the old commandant of the citadel, condemned as an aristocrat. A few days before, they had executed at the same place, M. de Vieux-Pont, whose only crime was that of having a parrot, in whose chatterings there were some sounds like the cry of "Vive le roi!" The parrot had escaped the fate of his master; and it was said that it had been pardoned at the entreaty of the citizeness Lebon, who had undertaken to convert it. The citizeness Lebon had been a nun of the abbey of Vivier: with this qualification added to many others, she was the fitting consort of the ex-curate of Neuville, and exercised a powerful influence over the members of the commission at Arras, in which were seated, as judges or jurymen, her brother-in-law and three uncles. The ex-nun was no less greedy of gold than blood. One evening at the theatre, she ventured to make this address to the crowded auditory:—"Ah, Sans Culottes, they say it is not for you that the guillotine is at work! What the devil, must we not denounce the enemies of the country? Do you know any noble, any rich person, any aristocratical shopkeeper? Denounce him and you shall have his moneybags." The atrocity of this monster was only equalled by that of her husband, who abandoned himself to the greatest excesses. Frequently after his orgies he was seen running through the city making bestial propositions to one young person, brandishing a sabre over another's head, and firing pistols in the ears of women and children.

An old apple-woman, with a red cap and sleeves tucked up to the shoulders, carrying a long stick of hazel-wood, usually attended him in his walks, and they were frequently met arm-in-arm together. This woman, called mother Duchesne, in allusion to the famous father Duchesne, figured as the Goddess of Liberty in several democratic solemnities. She regularly assisted at the sittings of the commission, for which she prepared the arrests by her speeches and denunciations. She thus brought to the guillotine all the inhabitants of one street, which was left entirely desolated.

I have often asked myself how, in the midst of such deplorable scenes, the taste for pleasure and amusement lost none of its relish. The fact is, that Arras continued to offer to me the same dissipations as ever; the ladies were as accessible; and I was easily convinced of that, as in a very few days I rose gradually in my amours from the young and pretty Constance, only child of corporal Latulipe, canteen-keeper of the citadel, to the four daughters of a notary, who had an office at the corner of the Rue des Capucines. Lucky should I have been had I confined myself to that, but I began to pay my homage to a beauty of the Rue de la Justice; and one day I met my rival in my walks. He, who was the old musician of the regiment, was one of those men who, without boasting of the success which they have obtained, hint in plain terms that they have experienced refusals. I charged him with boasting in this way, and he became enraged; I provoked him the more, and the more angry he grew: I had forgotten my own cause of anger with him, when I remembered that I had good grounds of offence. I demanded an explanation, which was useless; and he only consented to meet me after I had inflicted on him the most degrading humiliation. The rendezvous was fixed for the next morning. I was punctual; but scarcely had I arrived when I was surrounded by a troop of gendarmes and police officers, who demanded

my sword and ordered me to follow them. I obeyed, and was soon enclosed within the walls of the Baudets, whose use had been changed since the terrorists had put the population of Arras in a state of periodical decapitation. The jailor, Beaupré, covered with an enormous red cap, and followed by two large black dogs, who never quitted him, conducted me to a vast garret, where he held in his keeping the principal inhabitants of the country. There, deprived of all communication from without, they scarcely received nourishment, and not even that until it had literally been overhauled by Beaupré, who carried his precaution so far as to plunge his filthy dirty hands in the broth, to assure himself that there were no arms or keys. If anybody complained, he said to him, "Umph! you are very difficult to please for the time you have left to live. How do you know that it will not be your turn tomorrow? Oh, by the way, what is your name?"—"So and so."—"Ah! by my faith it is your turn tomorrow!" And the predictions of Beaupré were the less likely to fail as he himself pointed out the individuals to Joseph Lebon, who, after his dinner, consulted him saying, "Who shall we bathe tomorrow?"

Amongst the gentry shut up with us was the count de Bethune. One morning they sent for him to the tribunal. Before leading him out to the fore court, Beaupré said to him abruptly, "Citizen Bethune, since you are going down there, am not I to have all you leave behind you?"—"Certainly, M. Beaupré," answered the old man tranquilly. "There are no misters now," said the grinning wretch of a jailor, "we are all citizens;" and at the gate he again cried out to him, "Adieu, citizen Bethune!" M. de Bethune was however acquitted. He was brought back to prison as a suspected person. His return rejoiced us all; we thought him saved, but the next day he was again called up. Joseph Lebon, during whose absence the sentence of acquittal had been passed, arrived from the country: furious at being deprived of the blood of so worthy

a man, he had ordered the members of the commission to assemble immediately, and M. de Bethune, condemned at the next sitting, was executed by torchlight.

This event, which Beaupré announced to us with ferocious joy, gave me serious uneasiness: every day they condemned to death men who were ignorant even of the cause of their arrest, and whose fortune or situation in society never intended them for political commotion: and on the other hand, I knew that Beaupré, very scrupulous as to the number, thought not of the quality; and that frequently, not seeing immediately the number of individuals pointed out, sent the first who came to hand, that the service of the state might suffer nothing from delay. Every moment then might place me in the clutch of Beaupré, and you may believe that this idea was not the most satisfactory in the world.

I had been already detained sixteen days, when a visit from Joseph Lebon was announced; his wife accompanied him, and he had in his train the principal terrorists of the country, amongst whom I recognised my father's old barber, and an emptier of wells, called Delmotte, or Lantilette. I asked them to say a word for me to the representative, which they promised; and I augured the better of it as they were both in good estimation. However, Joseph Lebon went through the rooms, questioning the prisoners in a brutal manner, and pretending to address them with frightful harshness. When he came to me, he stared at me, and said in a tone half severe and half jesting, "Ah! ah! is it you, François? What, you an aristocrat,—you speak ill of the Sans Culottes,—you regret your old Bourbon regiment,—take care, for I can send you to be cooked (guillotined.) But send your mother to me." I told him, that being so strictly immured *(au secret)* I could not see her. "Beaupré," said he to the jailor, "let Vidocq's mother come in;" and went away, leaving me full of hope, as he had evidently

treated me with marked amenity. Two hours afterwards I saw my mother, who told me what I knew not before, that the musician whom I had challenged had denounced me. The denunciation was in the hands of a furious jacobin, the terrorist Chevalier, who, out of friendship to my rival, would certainly have been much against me, if his sister, at the persuasion of my mother, had not prevailed on him to exert himself to procure my discharge. Having left prison, I was conducted with great state to the patriotic society, where they made me take the oath of fidelity to the republic, and hatred to tyrants. I swore all they desired. What sacrifices will not a man make to procure his freedom!

These formalities concluded, I was replaced in the depôt, where my comrades testified much pleasure at seeing me again. After what had passed, I should have been deficient in gratitude had I not looked on Chevalier as my deliverer; I went to thank him, and expressed to his sister how much I was touched at the interest which she had so kindly testified to a poor prisoner. This lady, who was the most amorous of brunettes, but whose large black eyes did not compensate for their ugliness, thought that I was in love because I was polite; she construed literally some compliments which I paid her, and from the first interview, she so greatly misinterpreted my sentiments as to cast her regards upon me. Our union was talked of, and my parents were questioned on the point, who answered that eighteen was too young for marriage, and so the matter went on. Meanwhile battalions were formed at Arras, and being known as an excellent driller, I was summoned with seven other subaltern officers to instruct the 2d battalion of Pas-de-Calais, to which belonged a corporal of grenadiers of the regiment of Languedoc, named Cæsar, now *garde champêtre* at Colombre or Pateux, near Paris. He was our adjutant major. As for me, I was promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant on arriving at St Syl-

vestre-Capelle, near Bailleul, where we quartered. Cæsar had been fencing-master in his own regiment, and my prowess with the advanced guard of Kinski's cuirassiers was well known. We resolved to teach the practice as well as the theory of fencing to the officers of the battalion, who were much pleased at such an arrangement. Our lessons produced us some money, but not enough for our wants, or if you please, the desires of men of our abilities. It was particularly in good living that we were found wanting. What increased our regrets and appetites was, that the mayor with whom we lodged (my comrade and I) kept an excellent table. We sought in vain the means of increasing our supplies; an old domineering servant, named Sixca always defeated our intentions, and disturbed our gastronomic plans. We were disheartened and starving.

At length Cæsar found out the secret of breaking the charm which kept us from the table of the municipal functionary. At his suggestion, the drum-major came one morning to beat the morning call under the mayor's windows. Judge of the disturbance. It may be surmised that the old Mægara did not fail to request an intervention in putting a stop to this uproar. Cæsar promised with a mild air to use all his influence to put a stop to the noise, and then ran to beg the drum-major to renew the cause of complaint; and the next morning there was a row sufficient to awaken the dead from the adjacent church-yard; and at length, not to do things by halves, he sent the drum-major to practice with his boys at the back of the house; a pupil of the abbé Sicard could not have endured it. The old woman came to us, and invited the cunning Cæsar and me very graciously; but that was not enough. The drummers continued their concert, which only concluded when their respectable chief was admitted, as well as ourselves, to the municipal banquet. From that time no more drums were heard at St Sylvestre-Capelle, except when detachments

were passing by, and everybody was at peace except myself, whom the old woman began to threaten with her obliging favours. This unfortunate passion brought on a scene which must still be remembered in that part of the country, where it made much noise at the time.

It was the village feast, dancing, singing, drinking went on; and I bore my part so ably that they were compelled to lead me to bed. The next day I awoke before daybreak: as after all similar orgies, I had a giddy head, my mouth parched, and my stomach disordered; I wanted something to drink; and on rising I felt a hand as cold as a well-rope encircling my neck; my head was still wandering and weak from the over-night's debauch, and I shrieked out lustily. The mayor, who slept in an adjoining chamber, ran with his brother and an old servant, both armed with cudgels. Cæsar had not returned, and reflection had convinced me that the nocturnal visitor could only be Sixca; and pretending to be greatly alarmed, I told them that some hobgoblin had come to my side, and had glided out at the foot of the bed. They then laid on several blows with their sticks; and Sixca, perceiving that she would soon be killed, cried out "Gentlemen, do not strike, it is I—it is Sixca. I walked in my sleep to the officer's bed." At the same time she showed her head, and did well; for although they recognised her voice, yet the superstitious Flemings were about to renew the application of the bastinado. As I have said, this adventure, which almost realizes certain scenes of "My Uncle Thomas," and "The Barons of Felsheim," made much noise throughout the place. It spread even to Cassel, and procured me many intrigues. I had, amongst others, one with a pretty bar-maid, whom I should not allude to if she had not first taught me, that at the counter of some coffee-houses a good-looking fellow may get change for cash which he has not paid.

We had been quartered for three months when the division was ordered to Stinward. The Austrians had

given tokens of an intention to proceed to Poperingue, and the 2d battalion of the Pas-de-Calais was placed in the first rank. The night after our arrival the enemy surprised our outposts, and penetrated to the village of Belle, which we occupied, and we formed in battle array in the greatest haste. In this nocturnal manœuvre our young recruits evinced that intelligence and alacrity which are only to be found in Frenchmen. About six o'clock in the morning, a squadron of Wurmser hussars debouched on our left, and charged us without being able to break through our ranks. A column of infantry which followed them, attacked us at the same time with the bayonet; and it was only after a brisk encounter that our inferiority of numbers compelled us to fall back upon Stinward, our head-quarters.

On arriving there I received the congratulations of general Vandomme, and a billet for the hospital of St Omer, for I had had two sabre cuts in fighting with an Austrian hussar, who was killed whilst crying "*Ergib dich! ergib dich!* (surrender, surrender.)"

My wounds were not very severe, since at the end of two months I was enabled to rejoin the battalion which was at Hazebrouek. I then saw the strange corps called the Revolutionary Army.

The men with pikes and red caps, who composed it, took with them everywhere the guillotine. The convention had not, they said, found any better way of securing the fidelity of the officers of the fourteen armies which it had on foot, than by placing before their eyes the instrument of punishment reserved for traitors. All that I can say is, that this mournful sight almost killed with fear the inhabitants of the country through which it passed. It did not much flatter the military, and we had many quarrels with the Sans-culottes, who were called the body guard of the guillotine. I beat one of the party, who took upon himself to censure my gold epaulettes, when the regulation only ordered those of worsted. My fine array would have

brought misfortune on me, and I should have paid dearly for my disregard of the sumptuary law, if I had not been allowed to start for Cassel, where I was joined by my battalion, which was then arrayed like the other regiments: these officers became plain soldiers, and it was in that capacity that I was directed to enter the 28th battalion of volunteers, which formed part of the army destined to drive the Austrians from Valenciennes and Condé.

The battalion was quartered at Fresnes. In the farm house in which I was billeted, there arrived one day the whole family of a pilot, consisting of the husband, wife, and two children, one of whom was a girl of eighteen, who was remarkably handsome. The Austrians had taken the boat, laden with grain, which was their whole fortune; and these poor people, reduced to the garments which covered them, had no resource left but to take refuge with my host, their relation. This circumstance, their pitiable condition, and the beauty of the young girl Delphine, touched my heart.

During a foraging party, I discovered their boat, which the enemy were only gradually unlading and measuring out. I proposed to a dozen of my comrades to carry off the spoils from the Austrians. They acceeded to the proposition; our colonel gave his consent; and on a stormy night, we approached the vessel without being observed by the officer in charge, whom we despatched to feed the fish of the Escaut with five strokes of the bayonet. The wife of the pilot, who would follow us, instantly ran for a bag of florins which she had concealed in the grain, and gave them to my charge. We then loosened the boat, to let it float to a point where we had an entrenched post, but at the moment it got into the stream, we were surprised by the challenge of a guard, whom we had not observed amongst the bulrushes which concealed him. At the report of his gun which accompanied his second call to us, the next piquet flew to arms, and in a moment the bank was covered with soldiers, who fired a

shower of balls at the boat, which we were compelled to quit. My comrades and I cast ourselves on a sort of raft which we had, and the woman did the same; but the pilot, forgotten in the confusion, or stopping with a hope of escape, was taken by the Austrians, who were not sparing of their blows and kicks. This experiment had besides lost us three men, and I had two fingers broken by a musket ball. Delphine loaded me with caresses. Her mother having set out for Ghent, where she knew her husband had been sent as prisoner of war, we betook ourselves to Lille. I there passed my time of convalescence. As Delphine had a portion of the money found in the grain, we led a very pleasant life. We talked of marriage, and the affair was so far arranged that I started one morning for Arras, whence I was to return with the licence and my parents' consent. Delphine had already procured that of her parents, who were still at Ghent. A league from Lille, I remembered that I had forgotten my hospital billet, which it was indispensably necessary to produce before the municipality of Arras, and I returned for it. Arrived at the hotel, I went to the room we occupied and knocked; no one answered. It was impossible that Delphine could be out so early, it being scarcely six o'clock. I knocked again, and Delphine opened the door, stretching her arms and rubbing her eyes like some one who has been suddenly awakened. To prove her, I proposed that she should go with me to Arras, that I might present her to my parents, and she very tranquilly agreed. My suspicions were disappearing, and yet something whispered to me that she was deceiving me. I at length perceived that she frequently glanced towards the wardrobe. I pretended a desire to open it, which my chaste betrothed opposed, and gave me one of those excuses which a woman always has ready. But I was determined; and at length opened the closet, where I found concealed, beneath a heap of dirty linen, the doctor who had attended me during my convaleseence.

He was old, ugly, and misshapen. The first feeling was the humiliation of having such a rival; and yet I should have been more enraged at finding a good looking fellow, but this I leave for the decision of the numerous lovers who have been similarly circumstanced. As for me, I wished to begin by knocking out the brains of the intriguing Esculapius, but (which seldom happened to me) reflection restrained me. We were in a town of war, where they might play me some trick about my leave of absence. Besides Delphine was not my wife; I had no right over her. I determined on kicking her out; after which, I threw her from the window her clothes, and money enough to take her to Ghent. I allowed myself to retain the remainder of the money, which I thought I had lawfully acquired, since I had directed the splendid expedition which had rescued it from the clutch of the Austrians. I forgot to say that I allowed the doctor to return unmolested.

Having got rid of my faithless she, I determined on remaining at Lille, until the time of my furlough should expire; but it is as easy to conceal ourself in this city as at Paris, and my residence would have been undisturbed but for an affair of gallantry of which I shall spare the details. It will suffice to say, that being arrested in female attire, at the moment I was flying from the rage of a jealous husband, I was taken to the police office, where I at first obstinately refused to give any account of myself; for in fact, by speaking, I should either destroy the female who had been kind to me, or announce myself as a deserter. Some hours confinement changed my resolution; a superior officer to whom I had appealed to receive my declaration, and to whom I candidly stated the facts, seemed to take some interest for me. The commandant-general of the division wished to hear from my own lips this recital, which made him laugh to excess. He then gave orders that I should be set at liberty; and caused a line forthwith to be given to me to rejoin the 28th

battalion at Brabant: but instead of following this destination, I went to Arras, determined only to enter the service again at the last extremity.

My first visit was to the patriot Chevalier. His influence with Joseph Lebon made me hope that I should obtain through his interest an extension of leave, which he procured for me, and I was again introduced to the family of my benefactor. His sister, whose kind intentions towards me are already known, redoubled her kindness; and on the other hand, the habit of seeing her daily familiarised me with her ugliness; in short, matters came to such a point that I was not at all surprised to hear her one day declare that she was pregnant. She made no mention of marriage, not even pronouncing the word; but I saw but too clearly that to this complexion it must come at last, lest I should incur the vengeance of her brother, who would not have hesitated to denounce me as an aristocrat, and moreover a deserter. My parents, struck with all these considerations, and conceiving the hope of keeping me near them, gave their consent to the marriage, which the Chevalier family were very anxious about. It was at last settled, and I became a husband at eighteen years of age. I thought myself also almost the father of a family, but scarcely had a few days elapsed, when my wife confessed that her pretended pregnancy was the result of a plan to induce me to marry her. The excessive satisfaction which such an avowal gave me may be conceived; but the same motives which had decided me on contracting the alliance compelled me to be silent; and I determined to keep my own counsel, enraged as I was. A mercer's shop which my wife had opened turned out very badly; I thought that I found the cause of it in the repeated absence of my wife, who was all day at her brother's. I made my observations; and received orders to rejoin my regiment at Tournai. I might have complained of this expeditious mode of getting rid of a troublesome

husband; but I was so much tired of the yoke of Chevalier, that I resumed with joy my uniform, which I had cast off with so much pleasure.

At Tournay, a veteran officer of the Bourbon regiment, then adjutant-general, attached me to his office as a deputy, and particularly in the serving out of clothing. Business soon demanded that a man of trust should be dispatched to Arras. I set out post, and arrived in the city at eleven o'clock at night. As I was charged with orders, the gates were opened to me, and by an impulse for which I cannot account, I was induced to run to my wife's abode. I knocked for a long time, and no one answered. A neighbour, at length, opened the door, and I ran up stairs with all speed to my wife's chamber. On approaching, I heard the clank of a falling sabre, then a window opened, and a man leaped out into the street. It is needless to say that they had recognised my voice. I went down stairs with great haste, and soon overtook my Lovelace, in whom I recognised an adjutant-major of the 17th horse chasseurs, quartered at Arras. He was half naked; I led him back to my conjugal domicile, when he finished his toilette, and we then separated, on agreeing to fight the next day.

This scene had roused the whole neighbourhood. The greater part of the people, assembled at their windows, had seen me seize on the guilty adjutant, who had been found guilty of the fact in their presence. I had no lack of witnesses to prove and obtain the divorce, and that was what I intended to do; but the family of my chaste wife, who were desirous of keeping a protector for her, exerted themselves to check my measures, or at least to paralyze them. The next day, before I could meet the adjutant-major, I was arrested by the police and by gendarmes, who spoke of placing me in the Baudets. Fortunately for me, I plucked up courage, as I saw that there was nothing discouraging in my situation: I demanded to be carried before Joseph Lebon, which could not be denied

me. I appeared before the representative of the people, whom I found surrounded by an enormous pile of letters and papers—"What, is it you," said he to me, "who come here without permission—and for maltreating your wife too?" I saw what course I should pursue, I produced my orders, I called for the testimony of my neighbours against my wife, and that of the adjutant-major himself, who could not gainsay the facts. Indeed, I so clearly explained the affair, that Joseph Lebon was forced to confess that the wrongs were not of my committing; but out of regard, however, to his friend Chevalier, he made me promise not to remain long at Arras; and as I feared the wind might veer against me, as I had seen it with many others, I undertook to comply with his request as promptly as possible. Having completed my mission, I bade farewell to all my friends, and the next morning found me on the road to Tournay.

CHAPTER III.

Residence at Brussels—Coffee-houses—The gastronomic gendarmes—A forger—The roving army—The baroness and the baker boy—The disappointment—Arrival at Paris—A gay lady—Mystification.

I DID not find the adjutant-general at Tournay, he had set out for Brussels, and I set out on the following day by the diligence to join him there. At the first glance, I recognised amongst the travellers those individuals whom I had known at Lille, as passing the whole day at the public-houses, and living in a very suspicious manner. To my great astonishment, I found them clothed in uniforms of different regiments, one having the epaulettes of lieutenant-colonel, the others those of captain or lieutenant. How can they

have got them, thought I, for they have never seen service. I was lost in conjecture. On their side, they appeared at first much confused at the rencontre; but soon recovering, they testified a mutual surprise at finding me only a plain soldier. When I had explained to them how the regulation of the battalion had deprived me of my rank, the lieutenant-colonel promised me his protection, which I accepted, although scarcely knowing what to think of my protector. I saw clearly, however, that he had plenty of money, and paid for all at the table d'hôte, where he testified a violent republican feeling, at the same time affecting to have sprung from an ancient family.

I was not more fortunate at Brussels than at Tournay; the adjutant-general, who seemed to fly from me, had gone to Liege, for which place I set out, relying on not taking an useless journey this time; but on arriving, I learnt that my man had taken the road to Paris on the previous evening, having been summoned to appear at the bar of the convention. His absence would not be longer than a fortnight. I waited, but no one arrived. Another month passed, and still no adjutant. My cash was sensibly diminishing, and I resolved on returning to Brussels, where I hoped to find some means of extricating myself from my embarrassment. To speak with that candour on which I pique myself in giving this history of my life, I must confess that I had begun not to be over scrupulous in my choice of these means; my education had not made me a very precise man in such matters, and the injurious society of a garrison, which I had been used to from my childhood, had corrupted a naturally honorable mind.

It was then, without doing much violence to my delicacy, that I saw myself installed, at Brussels, with a gay lady of my acquaintance, who, after having been patronised by general Van-der-Nott, had fallen a little lower into public society. Idle, as are all who have but a precarious mode of existence, I passed whole

days and nights at the Café Turc or the Café de la Monnaie, the rendezvous of knights of the post, and professed gamblers. These fellows spent liberally, and played the devil's games; and as they had no ostensible means of living, I could not divine how they managed to carry on the war. A young fellow with whom I had associated myself, and whom I questioned on this subject, appeared struck at my inexperience, and I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him that I was really a novice. "The men whom you see there every day, and all day," said he, "are sharpers; those who only come once, and do not appear again, are dupes, who lose their money."

Thus instructed, I made many remarks, which till then had escaped me, I saw tricks of sleight of hand almost incredible; and what proved that there was still something good within me, I was often tempted to tell the pigeon whom they plucked. What happened to me will prove that my intentions were guessed.

A party was one evening engaged at the Café Turc; the dupe *(le gonse)* lost fifty louis, and demanding his revenge on the next day, went away. Scarcely had he gone out, when the winner, whom I now see daily in the streets of Paris, approached me, and said with an air of simplicity, "On my word, sir, we have played with luck, and you were right to bet on me; I have won ten games, which at four crowns a game, will make your share ten louis—here they are." I told him that he was mistaken, and that I had not interested myself in his play; he made me no answer, but put the ten louis into my hand. "Take it," said the young man who had initiated me into these mysteries, and who was sitting next to me, "take it and follow me." I obeyed mechanically, and when we reached the street, my Mentor added, "They have discovered that you watch the games, and fear lest you should blow the concern; and as there are no means of intimidating you, because they know that you have a strong arm and a mischievous hand, they have resolved

on giving you a slice of the cake, so you have a good means of existence before you, the two coffee-houses will be milch cows to you, whence you may draw your four or six crowns a day." In spite of the accommodating propensity of my conscience, I was desirous of replying, and making some observations—"You are a child," said my honourable friend; "we do not talk of robbery here—it is fortune only; and believe me, matters pass in the drawing-room as they do at the tavern—there they bubble, that is the word; and the merchant, who in the morning whilst at his desk would think it a crime to rob you of an hour's interest, would very quietly cheat you at the gaming-table in the evening." How could I answer such unanswerable arguments? I had nothing to reply but to keep the money, which I did.

These small dividends, joined to a remittance of a hundred crowns from my mother, enabled me to dash a little, and to show my gratitude to Emily, whose devotion to me I was not insensible of. Matters were in this agreeable train when I was one evening arrested at the Theatre du Parc, by several police-officers, and desired to produce my papers. This would have been a dangerous exhibition, and I said that I had none. They conducted me to the Madelonettes; and the next morning, at my examination, I found that I was unknown, and they had mistaken me for another person. I said that my name was Rousseau, born at Lille, and added, that I had come to Brussels on pleasure, and had not thought it expedient to provide myself with papers. I then asked to be conducted to Lille, at my own expense, by two gendarmes, which was granted, and for a few crowns my escort agreed that poor Emily should accompany me.

Having left Brussels, I was so far safe; but it was still more important that I should not reach Lille, where I should be certainly recognised as a deserter. Escape must be made at all risks, and this was Emily's opinion when I communicated my intention to her, and we

executed our preconcerted plan on reaching Tournay. I told the gendarmes that before they left me at Lille the next day, where I should be at once set at liberty, I wished to treat them with a good supper. Already taken with my liberality and mirth, they accepted the invitation with much willingness, and in the evening, whilst they were sleeping on the table, stupified with rum and beer, thinking me in the same condition, I descended by the sheets from the second-floor window. Emily followed, and we struck into the cross-roads, where they would not think of pursuing us. We thus reached the suburbs of Notre-Dame at Lille, when I dressed myself in the cloak of the horse-chasseurs, taking the precaution to put a black patch on my left eye, which made it impossible to recognise me. But I did not judge it prudent to remain long in a city so near my birth-place, and we started for Ghent. There, by a rather romantic incident, Emily found her father, which determined her to return to her family. It is true, that she would not consent to part from me, but with an express stipulation that I should rejoin her as soon as matters, which I said called me to Brussels, should be arranged.

My business at Brussels was to begin again to levy rates on the Café Turc and the Café de la Monnaie. But to present myself at this city, I wanted papers which should prove that I was really Rousseau, born at Lille, as I had said at my examination before I made my escape. A captain of Belgian carabineers in the French service, named Labbre, undertook for fifteen louis to supply me with the necessary credentials. At the end of three weeks he brought me a copy of my register of birth, a passport, and a certificate of half-pay in the name of Rousseau, all done better than I ever saw them executed by any other forger. Thus protected, I went to Brussels; the commandant of the place, an old comrade of Labbre's, undertook to make all right.

Quieted in this particular, I hastened to the Café

Turc. The first persons whom I saw in the room were the pretended officers with whom I had travelled. They received me with acclamation; and judging from the recital of my adventures that my situation was not over splendid, proposed that I should take the rank of sub-lieutenant of horse chasseurs, doubtless because they saw the cloak I wore. So advantageous a promotion was not to be refused; and it was then conferred on me: and when I said Rousseau was only an assumed name, the worthy lieutenant-colonel told me to take any one which I preferred. It was impossible to be more obliging. I resolved on keeping the name of Rousseau, on which they gave me, not a brevet, but a line of route for a sub-lieutenant of the 6th chasseurs, travelling with his horse, and being entitled to lodgings and rations.

I thus found myself incorporated with the roving army (armée roulante) composed of officers without brevet, and without troops, and who, furnished with false certificates and false lines of march, imposed the more easily on the commissaries at war, as there was less method at this period in the military arrangements. It is certain, that during a tour which we made through the Netherlands, we got all our allowances without the least demur. Yet the roving army was not then composed of less than two thousand adventurers, who lived like fishes in water. What is still more curious is, that they promoted themselves as rapidly as circumstances would allow: an advancement was the more profitable, as increase of rank brought increase of allowances. I passed in this manner to be captain of hussars; one of my comrades became chief of a battalion; but what most astonished me was, the promotion of Auffray, our lieutenant-colonel, to the rank of brigadier-general. It is true, that if the importance of the rank and the notoriety of a promotion of this kind rendered it more difficult to keep up the deception, yet the very audacity of such a step bade defiance to suspicion.

Returned to Brussels, we showed our billets, and I was sent to a rich widow, the baroness d'I——. I was received in the manner in which all Frenchmen were welcomed at Brussels at this period—that is, with open arms. A very handsome bed-chamber was placed at my sole disposal, and my hostess, delighted at my reserved conduct, assured me in the most gracious manner, that if her hours suited me, a place at her table would always be prepared for me. It was impossible to resist such pressing politeness, and I was profuse in my thanks, and I took my seat at her board the same day with three other guests, who were ladies, older than the baroness, who was about fifty. They were all charmed with the prepossessing manners of the captain of hussars. At Paris I should have felt somewhat awkward in such society, but I did very well at Brussels for a young man whose premature introduction to the world had necessarily injured his education. The baroness doubtlessly made some such reflections, for she paid me such little attentions as gave me much food for thought.

As I was sometimes absent to dine with the general, whose invitations I told her it was impossible to refuse, she desired me to present him and my other friends to her. At first I was not over desirous of introducing my associates to the society of this lady, who saw much company, and might have guests at her house who might guess our little speculations. But the baroness insisted on it, and I consented, at the same time stipulating that the general should only meet a small party, as he was desirous of keeping up a sort of incognito. He came; and the baronesss, who received him with marked attention, seated him near her, and talked to him for so long a time in an under tone that I was rather piqued. To disturb this tête-a-tête, I imagined that it would be a good plan to ask the general to sing us something, and accompany himself on the piano. I knew that he could not make out a note, but I relied that the usual persuasions

which guests make on such occasions would at least occupy his attention for some minutes. My stratagem only half succeeded; the lieutenant-colonel, who was of the party, seeing that the general was so much pressed, kindly offered himself as his substitute, and accordingly seated himself at the piano, and sung some little ditties with sufficient taste to procure him universal approbation, whilst I all the time wished him at the devil.

At last this interminable evening concluded, and each person withdrew, I raging with anger and plotting revenge against the rival who I imagined was about to carry off from me, I will not say the love, but the kind attentions of the baroness. Full of this idea, I went to my general at his rising, who was much surprised to see me so early. "Do you know," said he, without giving me time to break in upon his conversation, "do you know, my friend, that the baroness is ——" "Who spoke of the baroness?" interrupted I abruptly, "it is no matter what she is or what she is not."—"So much the worse," he replied, "if you are not speaking of her, I have nothing to understand." And, continuing thus to puzzle me for some time, he ended by telling me that his conversation with the baroness was concerning me only, and that he had so far pushed my interest, that he believed that she was quite disposed to—to marry me.

I at first thought that my poor comrade's head was turned. That one of the richest women of rank in the United Provinces would marry an adventurer, of whose family, fortune, and ancestors she knew nothing, was an idea that would have staggered the most credulous. Ought I, moreover, to engage in a deceit which must be discovered, sooner or later, and must ruin me? Besides, was I not really and actually married at Arras? These objections, and many others, which the remorse I must experience at deceiving the excellent woman who had treated me so kindly,

excited in my mind, did not for an instant stop my comrade, who thus answered them:—

"All you say is very fine, and I am quite of your opinion; and to follow my natural bias for virtuous behaviour, I only want 10,000*l.* a-year. But I see no reason for being scrupulous in your case. What does the baroness want? A husband, and a husband to her liking. Are you not that husband? Are you not determined to pay her every attention and to treat her as a person who is necessary to you, and of whom you have had no cause to complain? You talk of the inequality of your fortunes,—the baroness thinks not of that. You only want, to complete the matter, one single thing—a title of rank, which I will give you,—yes, I will give it to you! Why do you stare so? Listen, and do not interrupt me. You must be acquainted with some young nobleman of your own age and country; you are he, and your parents have emigrated and are now at Hamburgh. You entered France to endeavour to recover a third of the value of your paternal property, and to carry off the plate and a thousand double-louis concealed beneath the flooring of the drawing-room at the breaking out of the revolution: the presence of some strangers, the haste of departure, which an arrest issued against your father would not allow you to delay, has prevented you from getting this treasure. Arrived in this country, disguised as a journeyman tanner, you were denounced by the very person who had pledged himself to aid your enterprise; outlawed by the sentence of the republican authorities, you were nearly losing your head on the scaffold, when I fell in with you, half dead from inquietude and necessity. An old friend of the family, I procured for you the brevet of an officer of hussars, under the name of Rousseau, until an opportunity should offer of rejoining your noble parents at Hamburgh. The baroness already knows all this; yes, all, except your name, which, for

appearances' sake, I did not tell her; but in fact, because I did not know what appellation you might chuse to assume. That is a confidence which I left for yourself to communicate.

"Thus the affair is quite settled, and you are a gentleman, nothing can be said against that. Say nothing to me of your jade of a wife; you were divorced at Arras under the name of Vidocq, and you are married at Brussels under the name of count B——. Now listen to me. So far our business has gone on well, but that may be entirely marred at any moment. We have already met with some very inquisitive commissaries, and we may find others still less civil, who may cut off our supplies, and send us to the fleet at Toulon. You understand me, I know. The best that can happen to you will be to take up your knapsack and accoutrements in your old regiment, or else be shot for a deserter; but by marrying you acquire the means of a splendid life, and will be enabled to assist your friends. Since we have come to this point, let us understand each other; your wife has a hundred thousand florins a-year; there are three of us, and you shall give us each a pension of a thousand crowns, payable in advance, and I shall expect besides a premium of thirty thousand francs for having made a count of a baker's son."

I was quite stupified: but this harangue, in which the general had so skilfully stated all the difficulties of my situation, overcame all my opposition, which, to say the truth, was not very obstinate. I agreed to everything, and then returned to the baroness. The count de B—— fell at her feet; and the scene was so well played, and, though it may be scarcely believed, I entered so completely into the spirit of my part, that I even for a moment surprised myself—which I am told sometimes happens to impostors. The baroness was charmed at the sallies and sentiment with which my situation inspired me. The general was rejoiced with my success, as was every other

person. Several expressions escaped me which savoured a little of the canteen, but the general had told the baroness that political events had caused my education to be strangely neglected, and this explanation was satisfactory to her. Subsequently, marshal Suchet was no less easily satisfied, when Coignard, addressing him as "M. le *duque* d'Albufera," excused himself by the plea, that having emigrated when very young, he could consequently have but a very imperfect knowledge of the French language.

We sat down to table and dined in high spirits. After the dessert the baroness whispered me thus:—"I know, my dear sir, that your fortune is in the hands of the jacobins, and your parents at Hamburgh may be in some difficulty, oblige me by remitting to them a bill for three thousand florins, which my banker will send you to-morrow morning." I was about to express my thanks, when she rose from table and went into the drawing-room. I took the opportunity of telling the general what had just occurred. "Well, simpleton," said he, "do you think you are telling me any news? Was it not I who hinted to the baroness that your parents must be in want of money? We are at this moment your parents,—our funds are low; and to run any risk in procuring more, would be to hazard too foolishly the success of this adventure; I will undertake to negociate the bill. At the same time I suggested to the baroness that a supply of cash was needful for you to make some figure before your marriage, and it is understood that from now until the consummation of the marriage you shall have five hundred florins a month." I found the next day this sum on my dressing-table, where also was placed a handsome dressing-case and some trinkets.

Yet the register of my birth, as count de B—— whose name I had assumed, and which the general wished to procure, thinking that the other credentials might be forged, did not arrive; but the baroness,

whose blindness must appear inconceivable, to those who are not in a situation to know to what extent credulity can go, and the audacity of some rogues, consented to marry me under the name of Rousseau. I had all the necessary papers to justify my claim to that. Nothing was wanting but my father's consent; that was easily procured through the instrumentality of Labbre, whom we had under our thumb; but although the baroness had consented to marrying me under a name which she knew was not my own, yet she felt some repugnance at being as it were an accomplice in a falsehood, for which the only excuse was, that it saved my head from the block. Whilst we were planning a means for avoiding this, we learnt that the number of the armée roulante had become so considerable, that the eyes of government were opened, and that the most severe orders had been issued to check the abuse. We divested ourselves of uniforms, believing that we should then have nothing to fear, but the enquiries were so active that the general was compelled to set out suddenly for Namur, where he thought he should be less liable to detection. I explained his abrupt departure to the baroness, by attributing it to the general's having been in fear of a reprimand for having procured me a commission under an assumed name. This circumstance made her very uneasy for me, and I could only calm her fears by setting out for Breda, to which place she would accompany me.

I am not very well calculated to play the sentimental, and it would compromise the tact and finesse, for which I have some credit, if I made a parade and fuss, but I may be believed when I say that so much attachment affected me. The whispers of remorse, to which we cannot be always deaf at nineteen, were heard; I saw the abyss into which I was leading an admirable woman who had been so generous towards me; I pictured her as driving from her with horror the deserter, the vagabond, the biga-

mist, the forger; and this idea determined me to tell her all. Away from those who had drawn me into this imposture, and who had just been arrested at Namur, I decided on the measures I would adopt; and one evening, after supper, I determined on breaking the ice. Without detailing my adventures, I told the baroness, that circumstances which I could not explain compelled me to appear at Brussels under the two names by which she knew me, but that neither was the real one. I added, that events forced me to quit the Netherlands without the power of contracting an union which would have ensured my happiness, but that I should for ever preserve the recollection of the kindness which she had so generously evinced for me.

I spoke long, and with an emotion which increased my utterance and warmth of manner—and I am now astonished at the facility of my own eloquence when I think of it—but I feared to hear the reply of the baroness. Motionless, pale, and with a glazed eye, she heard me without interruption; then looking at me with a glance of horror, she rose abruptly and ran to shut herself up in her room. I never saw her again. Enlightened by my confession, and by some words which without doubt fell from me in the embarrassment of the moment, she saw all the dangers from which she had escaped, and unjustly suspected me perhaps of being even more culpable than I was; she might think that she had escaped from some vile criminal, whose hands might have been embrued in blood! On the other hand, if this complication of disguises might render her more apprehensive, the spontaneous avowal that I had made was sufficient to have quelled her fears; and this idea probably took hold of her, for the next day when I arose, the landlord gave me a casket, containing fifteen thousand francs in gold, which the baroness had left for me before her departure, at one o'clock in the morning, which I was glad to hear of, as her presence would have troubled me. Nothing now detaining me at

Bredá, I packed my trunks, and some hours afterwards set out for Amsterdam.

I have already said, and now repeat, that certain portions of this adventure may appear unnatural, and some may call them altogether false, but nothing is more true. The initials I have given will suffice to explain it to any person who knew Brussels thirty years ago. Besides, there is nothing uncommon in the affair, nothing more than is read of in the commonest romance. If I have entered into minute details, it is not to ensure a melo-dramatic effect, but with the intention of putting too credulous persons on their guard against a species of deception more frequently employed, and with more success than may be generally thought, in all classes of society; and such is the aim of these Memoirs. Let them be reflected on in every particular, and who knows but that some fine morning the duties of attorney-general, judge, gendarme, and agent of police, may be discovered to have become sinecures.

My stay at Amsterdam was very short. Having converted into cash two bills of those left me by the baroness, I set out, and on the 2d of March 1796 made my entrance into the capital, where at a future day my name was destined to make some noise. I put up at the hotel du Gaillard-Bois in Rue de l'Echelle, and first employed myself in changing my ducats into French money, and in selling a quantity of small jewellery and trinkets, now superfluous to me, as I resolved on establishing myself in some village in the environs, and entering into some business; but this project was not to be realized. One evening, one of those persons who are always to be found in hotels seeking acquaintance with travellers, proposed to present me at a house where there was a party. I unfortunately consented, confiding in my experience of the Café Turc and the Café de la Monnaie; but I soon found that gamblers of Brussels were but bunglers in comparison with these gentlemen, of whose society I now

formed one. Now the games of chance are better managed and more equal; but at that time, the police tolerating those places called etouffoirs, they were not contented with slipping a card or managing the suits as they liked—sometimes at M. Lafitte's, Messrs de S——, jun., and A. de la Rock's—the knowing ones had conventional signs so combined that they must succeed. Two sittings cleared me of a hundred louis; I had enough to spare still, but it was decreed that the money of the baroness should soon leave my company. The destined agent of its dissipation was a very pretty woman, whom I met at a table d'hote which I sometimes frequented. Rosine, for that was her name, at first showed an exemplary disinterestedness. A month afterwards I was her acknowledged lover, without having spent anything but for dinners, theatres, coach-hire, gowns, gloves, ribands, flowers, &c., all which things *cost nothing* at Paris, when we do not pay for them.

More and more enamoured of Rosine, I never left her. One morning, whilst at breakfast, I found her thoughtful; I pressed her with enquiries, which she resisted, and finished by avowing to me that she was troubled about a trifle due to her milliner and upholsterer. I offered my services instantly, which were refused with remarkable magnanimity, and I could not even learn the names of her two creditors. Many very excellent people would have left the matter here, but, like a true knight, I had not a moment's rest until Divine, the waiting-maid, had given me the desired addresses. From the Rue Vivienne, where Rosine lived, who was called madame de Saint Michel, I ran to the upholsterer, in the Rue de Clery. I told him the purpose of my visit, and he immediately overwhelmed me with politenesses, as is usually the case under such circumstances. He handed me the bill, which, to my consternation, amounted to twelve hundred francs; but I was too far gone to recede now. At the milliner's the same scene took place, with an

additional hundred francs; it was sufficient to have intimidated the boldest, and yet matters had not reached their climax. Some days after I had paid the creditors, they brought me jewels to purchase, to the amount of two thousand francs, and other similar expenses perpetually occurred. I saw my money fly away in this way, but fearing that it would not be so easily replenished, I parted with it less freely from day to day. However, I went on, and found that at the end of two months I had spent the moderate sum of fourteen thousand francs. This discovery made me serious, and Rosine immediately perceived it. She guessed that my finances were getting low. Women have great tact in this respect, and are but rarely deceived; and without being exactly cold towards me, she yet showed a kind of reserve, and on my manifesting astonishment, she answered me with singular abruptness, "that private matters put her out of temper." That was a trick, but I had been too deeply a sufferer already by my interference in these private matters to proffer again to arrange them, and I advised her with an air of coolness to have patience. She became only more contemptuous, passed some days in pouting, and then the storm burst.

At the conclusion of some trifling discussion, she said with a very flippant tone "that she did not choose to be crossed, and that those who could not put up with her ways had better remain at home." That was plain speaking; but I was weak enough to appear not to understand her. New presents brought back a temporary renewal of kindness, which however could no longer impose upon me. Then knowing all that she could get from my blind infatuation, Rosine soon returned to the charge for cash for a letter of credit for two thousand francs, which she had to pay or go to prison. Rosine in prison! The idea was insupportable, and I was about to discharge the debt at once, when chance placed in my way a letter which opened my eyes.

It was from the platonic friend of Rosine, who was staying at Versailles, and this interesting personage asked "when the pigeon would be quite plucked," that he might make his appearance. I intercepted this agreeable missive in the hands of Rosine's porter. I went to the perfidious woman, but she was absent: and enraged and humiliated at the same time, I could not restrain myself. I was in the bed-room, and at one kick I overthrew a stand covered with china, and a cheval glass was shivered to atoms. Divine, the waiting-maid, who had followed me, went down on her knees and begged me to pause from what would cost me so dear: I looked at her and hesitated, and a remnant of common sense induced me to think that she was right. I questioned her—and the poor girl, who had always been gentle and attentive, told me all about her mistress. It is the more in place to mention her statement, as the same things occur daily at Paris.

When Rosine met me she had not had anybody for two months: and thinking me fair game, from the expensive way I got rid of my money, conceived the plan of profiting by it; and her lover, whose letter I had intercepted, had consented, and went to Versailles to stay until my money should be exhausted. It was in the name of this lover that the proceedings had been carried on for the bill of exchange which I had formerly taken up, and the debts of the milliner and upholsterer were equally false.

Although cursing my egregious folly, I was yet astonished not to see the honourable lady, who had so well tricked me, return. Divine told me that most probably the porter had told her that I had got the letter, and that she would not very speedily appear. This conjecture was well founded. On learning the catastrophe which had prevented her from plucking the last feather from my wing, Rosine had set out in a hackney-coach for Versailles to rejoin her friend. The finery, which she left in her furnished apartments, was not sufficient to pay for the two months' lodging

due to the landlord, who, when I was going out, compelled me to pay for the china and cheval glass which I had broken in my first transports of anger.

Such violent inroads had dreadfully reduced my finances. Fourteen hundred francs alone remained of the ducats of the baroness! I left the capital with horror, as it had been so unpropitious to me, and resolved to regain Lille, where, knowing the localities, I might at least find resources which I should in vain seek for at Paris.

CHAPTER IV.

The gypsies—A Flemish fair—Return to Lille—Another acquaintance—The Bull's-eye—The sentence of punishment—St Peter's tower—The prisoners—A forgery.

LILLE, as a fortified and frontier town, offered great advantages to all who, like myself, were likely to find there useful acquaintances, either amongst the military of the garrison, or that class of persons who, with one foot in France and the other in Belgium, have really no home in either; and I relied a little on this for recovering myself, and my hope was not groundless. In the 13th chasseurs I met several officers of the south, and amongst the rest a lieutenant named Villedieu, whom we shall presently hear more of. All these persons had only known me in the regiment under one of those *noms de guerre*, which it was the custom at this time to assume, and were therefore not astonished at seeing me bear the name of Rousseau. I spent the day with them at the café or fencing-rooms, but this was not very lucrative, and I actually began to be in want of money. At this juncture a visitor of the café, whom they called Rentier, from his regular life, and who had made me many compliments, of which he

was very prodigal to all the world, enquired with some interest into my affairs, and asked me to travel with him.

To travel was all very well; but in what quality? I was no longer of an age to engage myself as Merry Andrew or valet-de-chambre of monkies and bears, and nobody would doubtless make me such a proposition; but yet it was necessary to know in what capacity. I asked my new protector very modestly what duties I had to perform in his service. "I am an itinerant doctor," said this man, whose bushy eye-brows and sun-burnt skin gave him a singular physiognomy; "I cure secret diseases with an infallible recipe. I cure animals, and lately restored the horses of a squadron of the 13th chasseurs, whom the veterinary surgeon had given over."—"Well," said I to myself, "once more a doctor." But there was no receding: we agreed to start next morning and to meet at five in the morning at the gate leading to the Paris road.

I was punctual at the rendezvous, and my friend, who was equally punctual, seeing my trunk strapped at the back of a lad, said that it would be useless to take it, as we should be only three days away, and must go on foot. At this observation I sent my goods back to the inn, and we walked on at a brisk rate, having, as my guide said, to make five leagues before mid-day. About this time we reached a solitary farm-house, where he was received with open arms and saluted by the name of Caron, which was strange to me who had always heard him called Christian. After a few words the master of the house went into his chamber and returned with two or three bags of crowns, which he spread on the table. My friend took them, and examining them singly with an attention which appeared to me affected, put aside one hundred and fifty and counted out a like sum for the farmer in different money, with a premium of six crowns: I understood nothing of this operation, which was carried on in a

Flemish dialect, of which I understood but very little. I was then much astonished when on leaving the farm, where Christian had said he would soon return, he gave me three crowns, saying that I ought to have a share of the profits. I could not learn what the profits were, and said so. "That is my secret," said he, with a mysterious air; "you shall know it at a future time, if I am satisfied with you." I told him that he might rely on my discretion since I knew nothing, only that he had changed crowns for another coin. He told me that this was the only point on which I ought to be silent, to avoid difficulties, and I therefore took the money without knowing what was to result from all this.

For four days we made similar excursions to various farms, and every evening I touched two or three crowns. Christian, whom they all called Caron, was well known in this part of Brabant, but only as a doctor; for, although he everywhere carried on his change of monies, the conversation was always about healing man or beast. I found besides that he had a reputation for removing the charms cast on animals. A proposal, which he made me as we entered the village of Wervique, initiated me into this species of magic—"May I rely on you?" said he to me, stopping suddenly.—"Certainly," said I; "but for what and how?"—"Listen, and learn."

He took from a sort of game-bag four square packets made up like those of chemists, and apparently containing some specifics; he then said, "You see these four farms, situated at some distance from each other, you can enter them the back way, taking care that no one sees them; get into the stable, and throw into the manger the powder of one of these packets. Take great care that you are not discovered—I will take care of the rest." I objected to this, as I might be surprised at the moment I was climbing the gate and they would seize me, and perhaps put some awkward questions. I refused point blank, in

spite of the perspective of the crowns, and all Christian's eloquence failed in persuading me. I even said that I would quit him at once, unless he would disclose to me his real condition and the mystery of his exchange of money, which seemed to me extremely suspicious. This declaration seemed to embarrass him, and, as we may learn, he endeavoured to draw me off the scent, in making me a half confidence.

"My country?" said he, answering my latter question, "I have none. My mother, who was hanged last year at Témeswar, belonged to a gang of gypsies (Bohemiens) who were traversing the frontiers of Hungary and Bannat, where I was born in a village on the Carpathian mountains. I say Bohemiens that you may understand, for that is not our proper name, we call ourselves Romamichels in a language which we are forbidden to teach to any persons; we are also forbidden to travel alone, and that is the reason why we are generally in troops of fifteen or twenty. We have had a long run through France, curing charms and spells of cattle, but this business is pretty well destroyed at present. The countryman has grown too cunning, and we have been driven into Flanders, where they are not so cunning, and the difference of money gives us a finer opportunity for the exercise of our industry. As for me, I have been at Brussels on private business which I have just settled, and in three days I rejoin the troop at the fair of Malines. It is at your pleasure to accompany me: you may be useful to us. But we must have no more nonsense now!"

Half embarrassed as to where I should shelter my head, and half curious to see the termination of this adventure, I agreed to go with Christian, without at all understanding how I could be useful to him. The third day we reached Malines, whence he told me we should return to Brussels. Having traversed the city, we stropped in the Faubourg de Louvain, before a wretched looking house with blackened walls, furrowed with wide crevices, and many bundles of straw as sub-

stitutes for window glasses. It was midnight, and I had time to make my observations by the moonlight, for more than half an hour elapsed before the door was opened by one of the most hideous old hags I ever saw in my life. We were then introduced to a long room where thirty persons of both sexes were indiscriminately smoking and drinking, mingling in strange and licentious positions. Under their blue loose frocks, ornamented with red embroidery, the men wore blue velvet waistcoats with silver buttons, like the Andalusian muleteers; the clothing of the women was all of one bright colour: there were some ferocious countenances amongst them, but yet they were all feasting. The monotonous sound of a drum, mingled with the howling of two dogs tied under the table, accompanied the strange songs, which I mistook for a funeral psalm. The smoke of tobacco and wood, which filled this den, scarcely allowed me to perceive in the midst of the room a woman who, adorned with a scarlet turban, was performing a wild dance with the most wanton postures.

On our entrance there was a pause in the festivity; the men came to shake hands with Christian and the women to embrace him, and then all eyes were turned on me, who felt much embarrassed at my present situation. I had been told a thousand strange stories of the Bohemiens, which did not encrease my comfortable feelings: they might take offence at any scruples I should make, and might get rid of me before it was even known where I had gone to, since no one could trace me to such a haunt. My disquietude became sufficiently apparent to attract the attention of Christian, who thought to assure me by saying that we were at the house of the duchess (a title which is equivalent to that of mother amongst such comrades), and that we were in perfect safety. My appetite decided me on taking my part at the banquet. The gin bottle was often filled and emptied, when I felt an inclination to go to bed. At the first word that I said

Christian conducted me to a neighbouring closet, where were already on clean straw several Bohemiens. It did not suit me to be particular; but I could not prevent myself from asking my patron why he, who had always before selected such good quarters, had made choice of so bad a sleeping place? He told me that in all towns, where there was a house of the Romamichels they were constrained to lodge, under pain of being considered as a false brother, and as such punished by a council of the tribe. Women and children all slept in this military bed; and the sleep which soon overtook them, proved that it was a familiar couch.

At break of day everybody was on foot, and the general toilet was made. But for their prominent features, without their raven-black tresses and that oily and tanned skin, I should scarcely have recognised my companions of the preceding evening. The men, clad in rich jockey holland vests, with leathern sashes like those worn by the inhabitants of Poissy, and the women covered with ornaments of gold and silver, assumed the costume of Zealand peasants: even the children, whom I had seen covered with rags, were neatly clothed, and had an entirely different appearance. All soon left the house and took different directions, that they might not reach the market place all together where the country people were assembling in crowds. Christian, seeing that I was preparing to follow him, told me that he should not have need of me the whole day, and that I might go wherever I pleased until evening, when we were to meet at the house of the duchess. He then put some crowns in my hand and left me.

As in our conversation of the previous evening he had told me that I was not compelled to lodge with the troop, I began by ordering a bed at the inn. Then, not knowing how to kill time, I went to the fair, and had scarcely gone round it four or five times when I met face to face an old officer of the recruiting bat-

talions, named Malgaret, whom I had known as making one of the gambling set at the Café Turc at Brussels. After the first salutations, he asked me why I was staying at Malines. I told him a history, and he was equally communicative about his travels; and we were thus content, each thinking that he had imposed on the other. Having taken some refreshments we returned to the fair, and every part where there was a crowd I met some of the lodgers of the duchess. Having told my companion that I had no acquaintance at Malines, I turned my head that they might not recognise me, for I did not much care to confess that I had such friends; but I had too cunning a fox to deal with. "Look," said he to me, looking me full in the face, "look at those people who are regarding you so attentively. Pray do you know them?" Without turning my head I replied that I had never seen them before, and did not even know who they were. "Who they are!" replied my companion, "I will tell you—supposing you to be ignorant—they are robbers!"—"Robbers!" I replied. "How do you know it?" "In the same way that you shall soon know if you will follow me, for it is a fair bet that we shall not have far to go without finding them at work. Come along—here they are."

Raising my eyes towards a crowd in front of a menagerie, I perceived one of the false jockeys taking the purse of a fat grazier, whom we saw the next moment seeking for it in his pockets: the Bohemien then entered a jeweller's shop, where were already two of the pretended Zealand peasants, and my companion assured me that he would not come out until he had pilfered some of the jewels that were shown to him. We then left our post of observation to go and dine together: and, at the end of the repast, seeing my companion disposed to talk, I pressed him to tell me precisely who the people were whom he had pointed out to me, assuring him that, in spite of appearances, I

knew but very little of them. He complied, and told me as follows:

"It was in the prison (Rasphuys) of Ghent, where I passed six months, some years since, at the end of a game at which some *doctors* (loaded dice) were discovered, that I made acquaintance with two men of the troop now at Malines. We were in the same cell, and as I passed myself off for an accomplished thief, they told me, without distrust, all their light-fingered tricks: and even gave me the minutest details of their singular existence. These people come from the country about Moldavia, where a hundred and fifty thousand of them vegetate, like the Jews in Poland, without the power of fulfilling any office but that of executioner. Their name changes with their change of country; they are ziguiners in Germany, gypsies in England, zingari in Italy, gitanos in Spain, and Bohemiens in France and Belgium. They thus traverse all Europe, exercising the lowest and most dangerous trades. They clip dogs, tell fortunes, mend crockery, repair saucepans, play wretched music at the public-house doors, speculate in rabbit-skins, and change foreign money which they find out of the usual circulation.

"They sell specifics against the illness of cattle, and to promote the business, they dispatch trusty envoys, who, under pretences of making purchases, get into the stables, and throw drugs into the mangers, which make the cattle sick. They then present themselves, and are received with open arms, and knowing the nature of the malady, they easily remove it, and the farmer hardly knows how to be adequately grateful. This is not all; for before they quit the farm, they learn whether the husbandman has any crowns of such and such a year, or such and such a stamp, promising to give a premium for them. The interested countryman, like all persons who but seldom find an opportunity of getting money, spreads his coin before

them, of which they invariably contrive to pilfer a portion. What is almost incredible is, that they are seen to repeat with impunity the same trick frequently, at the same house. Indeed, what is most villanous of all in their transactions is, that they profit by these circumstances, and their knowledge of the localities of the country, to point out to burglars the detached farms in which there is money, and the means of getting at it, and it is needless to add, that they come in for their share of the spoil."

Malgaret gave further details concerning the Bohemiens, which determined me on quitting their dangerous society as speedily as possible.

He was speaking thus, looking into the street from time to time from the window near which we were seated, when suddenly I heard him exclaim, "Oh, the devil! My friend of the Rasphuys at Ghent!"—I looked out, and saw Christian walking very fast, and with an air of busy import. I could scarcely help exclaiming aloud. Malgaret, profiting by the trouble into which his explanation had thrown me, had not much difficulty in extracting from me how I was associated with the Bohemiens. Seeing me resolved on quitting their company, he proposed that I should accompany him to Courtrai, where, he said, he had some game in view. After having taken from the inn the few things I had brought from the house of the duchess, I set out with my new associate, but we did not find at Courtrai the friends whom Malgaret had relied on meeting there, and it was our cash, and not theirs, that was spent. Despairing of their appearance, we returned to Lille; I had still one hundred francs left, and Malgaret gambled with them on our mutual account, and lost them, together with what he had of his own, and I afterwards learnt that he had confederated with his antagonist to cheat me out of what I had left.

In this extremity, I had recourse to my abilities; and some fencing-masters, to whom I spoke of my situa-

tion, gave me a benefit at a fencing-match, which produced me a hundred crowns. Set up with this sum, which for a time secured me from want, I frequented public places, balls, &c. I then formed an intimacy, of which the circumstances and consequences decided the destiny of my whole life. Nothing could be more simple than the commencement of this important episode of my history. I met at the Bal de la Montagne with a young lady, with whom I was soon on good terms. Francine, for that was her name, appeared much attached to me, and at every moment made me protestations of fidelity, which did not, however, prevent her from giving private interviews to a captain of engineers.

I one day surprised them supping at a tavern in the place Riourt, and transported with rage, I heartily thumped the astonished pair. Francine, with her hair hanging loose, fled; but her partner remained, and making a charge against me, I was arrested and conducted to the prison of Petit Hôtel. Whilst my trial was preparing, I was visited by many females of my acquaintance, who made it a duty to offer me their consolations. Francine learnt this, and her jealousy aroused, she dismissed the unfortunate captain, withdrew the charge against me which she had made at the same time with his, and beseeching me to receive her, I weakly consented. The judges heard of this fact, which was tortured into a premeditated plan between me and Francine, and I was sentenced to three months imprisonment. From the Petit Hôtel I was transferred to St Peter's Tower, where I obtained a chamber called the Bull's-eye. Francine remained with me there for a part of the day, and the remainder I passed with the other prisoners, amongst whom were two old serjeant-majors, Grouard and Herbaux, the latter, son of a boot-maker at Lille, both condemned for forgeries; and a labourer, named Boitel, condemned to six years' confinement for stealing garden-tools; this latter, who was the father of a

large family, was always bewailing his imprisonment, which, he said, deprived him of the means of working a small farm, which he only knew how to turn to advantage. In spite of the crime he had committed, much interest was evinced in his favour, or rather towards his children, and many inhabitants of his district had drawn up and presented petitions in his favour, which were as yet unanswered, and the unfortunate man was in despair, often repeating that he would give such and such a sum for his liberty. Grouard and Herbaux, who were in St Peter's Tower, waiting to be sent to the gallies, thought they could get him pardoned by means of a memorial, which they drew up, or rather plotted together; a plan which was ultimately so injurious to me.

Grouard began to complain that he could not work quietly in the midst of the uproar of the common room, in which were eighteen prisoners singing, swearing, and quarrelling all day. Boitel, who had done me some little kind offices, begged me to lend my chamber to the compilers of his memorial, and I consented, although very unwillingly, to give it up to them for four hours a day. From the next morning they were there installed, and the jailor frequently went there secretly. These comings and goings, and the mystery which pervaded them, would have awakened suspicions in a man accustomed to the intrigues of a prison, but ignorant of their plans, and occupied in drinking with the friends who visited me, I interested myself but too little with what was going on in the Bull's-eye.

At the end of eight days, they thanked me for my kindness, telling me that the memorial was concluded, and that they had every reason to hope for the pardon of the petitioner, without sending it to Paris, from the influence of the representations of the people at Lille. All this was not very clear to me, but I did not give it much attention, thinking it no business of mine; and there was no occasion for me

to concern myself. But it took a turn which threw blame on my carelessness, for scarcely had forty-eight hours elapsed after the finishing of the memorial, when two brothers of Boitel arrived express. and came to dine with him at the jailor's table. At the end of the repast, an order arrived, which being opened by the jailor, he cried, " Goods news by my faith! it is an order for the liberation of Boitel;" at these words they all arose in confusion, embraced him, examined the order, and congratulated him; and Boitel, *who had sent away his clothes, &c. the previous evening*, immediately left the prison, without bidding adieu to any of the prisoners.

Next day, about ten o'clock in the morning, the inspector of the prisons came to visit us; and on the jailor's showing him the order for Boitel's liberation, he cast his eye over it, said that it was a forgery, and that he should not allow the prisoner to depart until he had referred to the authorities. The jailor then said that Boidel had left on the previous evening. The inspector testified his astonishment that he should have been deceived by an order signed by persons whose names were unknown to him, and at last placed him under a guard. He then took the order away with him, and soon made himself certain that, independently of the forgery of the signatures, there were omissions and errors in form which must have struck any person at all familiar with such papers.

It was soon known in the prison, that the inspector had placed the jailor under arrest, for having allowed Boitel to go out under a false order, aud I began to surmise the truth. I desired Grouard and Herbaux to tell me the whole, observing indistinctly, that the affair might compromise me; but they swore most solemnly that they had done nothing but draw up the memorial, and were themselves astonished at its prompt success. I did not believe a word of this, but having no opposing proofs, I was compelled to wait for the event. The next day I was summoned to the court,

before the judge, and answered, that I knew nothing of the framing of the forged order, and that I had only lent my room, as the only quiet place in the prison, for the preparation of the justificatory memorial. I added, that all these facts could be corroborated by the gaoler, who frequently went into the room during their work, appearing to be much interested for Boitel. Grouard and Herbaux were also interrogated, and then placed in solitary confinement, whilst I returned to my chamber. Scarcely had I entered it, when Boitel's bedfellow came to me, and told me the whole plot, which I had only before suspected.

Grouard, hearing Boitel so often repeat that he would willingly give a hundred crowns to procure his liberty, had planned with Herbaux the means of getting him out, and they had devised no mode so simple as that of forging a false order. Boitel was let into the plot, as may be supposed: they only told him, that as there were many persons to gain over, he must give four hundred francs. It was then that they applied for my chamber, which was indispensable for the due concoction and forging of the order, without being perceived by the other prisoners; moreover, the gaoler was in their confidence, to judge by his frequent visits, and the circumstances which had preceded and followed the departure of Boitel. The order had been brought by a friend of Herbaux, named Stofflet. He appeared besides only to decide Boitel on giving four hundred francs, which the forgers had persuaded him was to be shared with me, although I had rendered him no other service than that of lending my room.

Thus instructed, I at first wished the person who had given me these particulars to make a declaration of the particulars, but he obstinately refused, saying that he would not reveal to justice a secret confided to his oath; and besides, he did not feel desirous of being knocked on the head by the prisoners for *turning nose (pour avoir mangé le morceau.)* He dissuaded me even from informing the judge, telling me that I was in no

danger. But on arresting Boitel in the country, and bringing him to Lille, and putting him in solitary confinement, he named as the aiders and abettors in his escape, Grouard, Herbaux, Stofflet, and Vidocq. On this confession, we were questioned at the tower, and I persisted in my first declaration, although I could have extricated myself in a moment, by disclosing all that Boitel's bedfellow had told me; but I was so fully convinced that it was impossible to substantiate any charge against me, that I was thunderstruck when, at the expiration of my three months, I was prevented from quitting the prison by an entry stating me as arraigned as an "accomplice in the forgery of authentic and public documents."

CHAPTER V.

Three escapes—The *Chauffeurs*—The suicide—The interrogatory—Vidocq accused of assassination—Sent back on a complaint—Fresh escape—Departure for Ostend—The smugglers—Vidocq retaken.

I THEN began to think that this affair might turn out badly for me; but any others tatement without proof would be more dangerous to me than silence, which it was now too late to think of breaking. All these reflections affected me so much, that I had a severe illness, during which time Francine attended me most carefully. I was scarcely convalescent, when, unable to support the state of incertitude in which I found my affairs, I resolved on escaping, and to escape by the door, although that may appear a difficult step. Some particular observations made me choose this method in preference to any other. The wicket-keeper at St Peter's Tower was a galley-slave from the Bagne (place of confinement) at Brest, sentenced for life. After the revision of the penal laws and the code of

1791, he had obtained a commutation of six years confinement in the prison at Lille, where he had made himself useful to the jailor, who, persuaded that a man who had passed four years at the Bagne must be as watchful as an eagle, since he must know every method of escape, promoted him to the office of gate-keeper, which he thought he could not confide to more trustworthy hands. It was, however, on the stupidity of this prodigy of cunning that I relied for the success of my project; and it appeared the more easy to deceive him, as he was so confident in his own sagacity. In a word, I relied on passing by him under the disguise of a superior officer, charged with visiting St Peter's Tower, which was used as a military prison, twice a-week.

Francine, whom I saw daily, got me the requisite clothing, which she brought me in her muff. I immediately tried them on, and they suited me exactly. Some of the prisoners who saw me thus attired assured me that it was impossible to detect me. I was the same height as the officer whose character I was about to assume, and I made myself appear twenty-five years of age. At the end of a few days, he made his usual round, and whilst one of my friends occupied his attention, under pretext of examining his food, I disguised myself hastily, and presented myself at the door, which the gaol-keeper, taking off his cap, opened, and I went out into the street. I ran to a friend of Francine's, as agreed on in case I should succeed, and she soon joined me there.

I was there perfectly safe, if I could resolve on keeping concealed; but how could I submit to a slavery almost as severe as that of St Peter's Tower. As for three months I had been enclosed within four walls, I was now desirous to exercise the activity so long repressed. I announced my intention of going out; and, as with me an inflexible determination was always the auxiliary of the most capricious fancy, I did go. My first excursion was safely performed, but

the next morning, as I was crossing the Rue Ecremoise, a serjeant named Louis, who had seen me during my imprisonment, met me, and asked if I was free. He was a severe practical man, and by a motion of his hand could summon twenty persons. I said that I would follow him; and begging him to allow me to bid adieu to my mistress, who was in a house of Rue de l'Hopital, he consented, and we really met Francine, who was much surprised to see me in such company; and when I told her that having reflected that my escape might injure me in the estimation of my judges, I had decided on returning to St Peter's Tower, to wait the result of the process.

Francine did not at first comprehend why I had expended three hundred francs, to return at the end of four months to prison. A sign put her on her guard, and I found an opportunity of desiring her to put some cinders in my pocket whilst Louis and I took a glass of rum, and then set out for the prison. Having reached a deserted street, I blinded my guide with a handful of cinders, and regained my asylum with all speed.

Louis having made his declaration, the gendarmes and police-officers were on the full cry after me; and there was one Jacquard amongst them who undertook to secure me if I were in the city. I was not unacquainted with these particulars, and instead of being more circumspect in my behaviour, I affected a ridiculous bravado. It might have been said that I ought to have had a portion of the premium promised for my apprehension. I was certainly hotly pursued, as may be judged from the following incident.

Jacquard learnt one day that I was going to dine in Rue Notre-Dame. He immediately went with four assistants, whom he left on the ground-floor, and ascended the staircase to the room where I was about to sit down to table with two females. A recruiting serjeant, who was to have made the fourth, had not yet arrived. I recognised Jacquard, who never having seen me, had not the same advantage, and besides my

disguise would have bid defiance to any description of my person. Without being at all uneasy, I approached, and with the most natural tone I begged him to pass into a closet, the glass door of which looked on the banquet-room. "It is Vidocq whom you are looking for," said I; "if you will wait for ten minutes you will see him. There is his cover, he cannot be long. When he enters, I will make you a sign; but if you are alone, I doubt if you can seize him, as he is armed, and resolved to defend himself."—"I have my gendarmes on the staircase," answered he, "and if he escapes——" "Take care how you place them then," said I with affected haste. "If Vidocq should see them he would mistrust some plot, and then farewell to the bird."—"But where shall I place them?"—"Oh, why in this closet—mind, no noise, that would spoil all; and I have more desire than yourself that he should not suspect anything." My commissary was now shut up in four walls with his agents. The door, which was very strong, closed with a double lock. Then, certain of time for escape, I cried to my prisoners, "You are looking for Vidocq—well, it is he who has caged you; farewell." And away I went like a dart, leaving the party shouting for help, and making desperate efforts to escape from the unlucky closet.

Two escapes of the same sort I effected, but at last I was arrested and carried back to St Peter's Tower, where, for greater security, I was placed in a dungeon with a man named Calendrin, who was also thus punished for two attempts at escape. Calendrin, who had known me during my first confinement in the prison, imparted to me a fresh plan of escape, which he had devised by means of a hole worked in the wall of the dungeon of the galley-slaves with whom we could communicate. The third night of my detention all was managed for our escape, and eight of the prisoners who first went out were so fortunate as to avoid

being detected by the sentinel, who was only a short distance off.

Seven of us still remained, and we drew straws, as is usual in such circumstances, to determine which of the seven should first pass. I drew the short straw, and undressed myself that I might get with greater ease through the hole, which was very narrow, but to the great disappointment of all, I stuck fast without the possibility of advancing or receding. In vain did my companions endeavour to pull me out by force, I was caught as if in a trap, and the pain of my situation was so extreme, that not expecting further help from within, I called to the sentry to render me assistance. He approached with the precaution of a man who fears a surprise, and presenting his bayonet to my breast, forbade me to make the slightest movement. At his summons the guard came out, the porters ran with torches, and I was dragged from my hole, not without leaving behind me a portion of my skin and flesh. Torn and wounded as I was, they immediately transferred me to the prison of Petit Hotel, when I was put into a dungeon, fettered hand and foot.

Ten days afterwards I was placed amongst the prisoners, through my intreaties and promises not to attempt again to escape. Up to this time I had lived with men who were sharpers, robbers, and forgers; but here I found myself in the midst of most hardened villains, and of this number was one of my fellow-townsman, named Desfosseux, a man of wonderful ingenuity, prodigious strength, and who, condemned to the gallies from the age of eighteen, had escaped from the Bagne three times, whence he was to be sent again with the next chain of convicts. He told all his exploits and hair-breadth 'scapes with much coolness, and said that no doubt "one day or other the guillotine would make sausage-meat of his flesh." In spite of the secret horror with which this man inspired me, I took a pleasure in conversing with him of the

wild life he had led, and what most induced me to make so many enquiries of him, was that I hoped he would be able to aid me with some means of escape. With the same motive, I associated with many individuals imprisoned as part of a band of forty or fifty Chauffeurs, who infested the adjacent districts, under the command of the famous Sallambier. They were named Chopine (called the Nantzman), Louis (of Douay), Duhamel (called Lilleman), Auguste Poissard (called the Provençal), Caron the younger, Caron the Hump-back, and Bruxellois (called the Daring), an appellation which he deserved for an act of courage which is seldom heard of even in bulletins.

At the moment of entering a farm with six of his comrades, he thrust his left hand through an opening in the shutter to lift the latch, but when he was drawing it back, he found that his wrist had been caught in a slip knot. Awakened by the noise, the inhabitants of the farm had laid this snare, although too weak to go out against a band of robbers which report had magnified as to numbers. But the attempt being thus defeated, day was fast approaching, and Bruxellois saw his dismayed comrades looking at each other with doubt, when the idea occurred to him that to avoid discovery they would knock out his brains. With his right hand he drew out his clasp knife with a sharp point, which he always had about him, and cutting off his wrist at the joint, fled with his comrades without being stopped by the excessive pain of his horrid wound. This remarkable deed, which has been attributed to a thousand different spots, really occurred in the vicinity of Lille, and is well authenticated in the northern districts, where many persons yet remember to have seen the hero of this tale, who was thence called Manchot (or one-armed), executed.

Introduced by so distinguished a worthy as my townsman Desfosseux, I was received with open arms in the circle of bandits, where from morning to night

the means of escape was our only theme. Under these circumstances, as in many others, I remarked that with prisoners, the thirst for liberty, becoming the engrossing idea, produced plots inconceivable by the man who discusses them at his ease. Liberty!—in this word all is centered, this thought pursues the prisoner throughout the tedious day, and during the wintry nights spent in utter darkness, when abandoned to all the tormenting impulses of impatience. Enter any prison, you will hear shouts of noisy mirth, you may almost imagine yourself at a place of entertainment; approach—mouths grin horribly a ghastly smile, but the eyes betray no pleasure, they are stern and haggard; this assumed gaiety is forced in its hideous yells, like that of the jackal, which dashes against its cage, striving to burst the bars.

Well knowing what men they had to guard, our jailors watched us with a care that marred all our plans, the only opportunity which gave a chance of success, however, at last offered itself, and I seized on it before my companions, cunning as they were, had even thought of it. We were about eighteen of us in the anti-room of the examining judge, where we had been conducted for the purpose of being interrogated, which was guarded by soldiers and two gendarmes, one of whom had laid down his hat and cloak near me, whilst he went to the bar, whither his companion was also summoned by the ringing of a bell. I put his hat on my head instantly, and wrapping myself in his cloak, took a prisoner under my arm as if I was taking him out for a pressing necessity; I went to the door, which the corporal of the guard immediately opened, and we got out once more. But what could we do without money or papers? My comrade went into the province, and I, at the risk of being retaken, returned to Francine, who, overjoyed at seeing me, determined on selling her furniture, and flying with me to Belgium. This was

determined on, when a most unexpected event, attributable only to my incredible carelessness, completely overthrew our plan.

The night before our intended departure, I met in the dusk of the evening a woman of Brussels, named Eliza, with whom I had been on intimate terms. She embraced me, and begged me to go and sup with her, and, conquering my weak objections, kept me with her until the next day. I persuaded Francine, who had sought me everywhere, that, pursued by police-officers, I had been compelled to take refuge in a house which I could not quit till daybreak. She was at first satisfied; but having by accident discovered that I had passed the night with a female, her jealousy burst forth in overwhelming and tearful reproaches against my ingratitude, and in her rage she swore that she would have me arrested. To put me in prison was certainly the best mode of putting a stop to my infidelities; but Francine was a woman of her word, and I deemed it prudent to allow her anger to evaporate, intending to return after some time, and start with her as we had agreed on. However, as I needed my clothes, and did not wish to ask for them, for fear of a fresh burst of temper, I went alone to our chamber, of which she had the key, and forcing a shutter, I took out what I wanted, and left the house.

At the end of five days, clothed like a countryman, I left the place I had inhabited in the suburbs, and going into the city, I went to the house of a seamstress, a friend of Francine's, on whose mediation I relied for reconciling us. This woman seemed so greatly embarrassed, that fearing I should implicate her, I only begged her to go and seek my mistress. "Yes," said she, with a very remarkable air, and without looking at me. She went out, and I was left alone to reflect on my strange reception.

A knock at the door was heard, which I hastened to open, thinking that I should receive Francine in my arms, when, a crowd of gendarmes and police-

officers appeared, who seizing me, I was carried before the magistrate, who began by asking me where I had been during the last five days. My answer was brief, as I never implicated those who sheltered me. The magistrate observed, that my obstinacy in refusing him any explanation would go much against me, and that my head was in jeopardy, &c. &c. I only laughed, as imagining this remark to be a trap to force me to confess through fear. I persisted in my silence, and was remanded to the Petit Hotêl.

Scarcely had I set foot in the street, when all eyes were fixed on me. People called to each other and whispered, which I thought was caused by my disguise, and I scarcely heeded it. They made me enter a cell, where I was left alone in the straw heavily ironed. At the end of two hours the jailor came, who, pretending to pity me, and take an interest in me, told me that my resolution not to confess where I had spent the last five days, would injure me in the estimation of the judges; but I was immoveable, and two more hours elapsed, when the jailor returned with a turnkey, who took off my fetters, and desired me to go down to the office, where two judges were in attendance. I was again questioned, and made a similar reply, and they then stripped my clothes entirely off, and stamped on my right shoulder a blow that would have killed an ox, which was to mark me; my clothes were taken away, after being described in the procès-verbal; and I was sent back to my cell, covered with a shirt of sail-cloth, in a surtout half black and half grey, in rags, which had served at least two generations of prisoners.

All this gave me food for reflection. It was evident that the seamstress had denounced me, but for what? She had no complaint to make of me. In spite of her fury, Francine would have reflected twice, before she denounced me; and if I had withdrawn for some days, it was rather because I did not wish to irritate her by my presence, than from any fear of consequences.

Why these reiterated inquiries, these mysterious words of the jailor, and this description of my attire? I was lost in a labyrinth of conjecture, and for twenty-five hours I was kept in the strictest solitary confinement; I then underwent an examination which informed me of all.

"What is your name?"

"Eugene François Vidocq."

"What is your profession?"

"Military."

"Do you know the girl Francine Longuet?"

"Yes; she is my mistress."

"Do you know where she is at this moment?"

"She should be at a friend's house, for she sold her own furniture."

"What is the name of this friend?"

"Madame Bourgeois."

"Where does she live?"

"At a baker's in the Rue St André."

"How long had you left the woman Longuet when you were arrested?"

"Five days."

"Why did you leave her?"

"To avoid her anger; she knew that I had passed the night with another female, and in a fit of jealousy threatened to have me arrested."

"Who was the woman with whom you passed the night?"

"A former mistress."

"What is her name?"

"Eliza—I only know her by that name."

"Where does she live?"

"At Brussels, whither, I believe, she has returned.

"Where are the things which you had in the house of the woman Longuet?"

"In a place that I can point out if need be."

"How could you get them, having quarrelled with her, and not wishing to see her?"

"After our quarrel in the café, where she found

me, she threatened to call for the guard to seize me: knowing her perverseness, I ran down the bye streets, and reached the house before her, which I had hoped to do, and wanting some clothes, I forced a shutter to effect my entrance, and then took out what I wanted. You just now asked me where these things are, and I will now tell you, they are in the Rue Saint-Sauveur, at the house of Duboc, who will corroborate this."

"You do not speak truth—before you left Francine at her house, you had a great quarrel; it is said that you struck her."

"That is false; I did not see Francine at her own home after the quarrel, and consequently I could not have maltreated her. She can corroborate this."

"Do you know this knife?"

"Yes; it is the one I generally use at my meals."

"You see the blade and haft are covered with blood. Does not the sight of it make any impression on you? You are agitated!"

"Yes," I replied with emotion; "but what has happened to Francine? Tell me, and I will give every possible explanation."

"Did nothing particular happen to you when you carried off your clothes?"

"Nothing that I can at all call to mind."

"You persist in your declarations?"

"Yes."

"You are imposing on justice;—that you may have time for reflection on your position, and the consequences of your obstinacy, I shall now delay the remainder of your examination until to-morrow.—Gend'armes, watch this man most carefully—Go."

It was late when I returned to my cell, where they brought me my allowance, which the trouble I experienced from the result of the interrogatory, would not allow me to eat; I could not sleep, and passed the whole night without closing an eye. Some crime had been committed, but on whom? By whom? Why was I inculpated? I had asked myself

that question a thousand times, without getting at any rational solution, when they came to fetch me on the following morning to renew my examination. After the usual questions, a door was opened, and two gendarmes entered, supporting a female. It was Francine—Francine pale, and altered so as to be scarcely recognizable. On seeing me, she fainted; and when I wished to approach her, I was withheld by the gendarmes. They took her away, and I alone remained with the examining judge, who asked me if the sight of the unfortunate woman did not prompt me to confess all? I protested my innocence, asserting that I did not know till that instant that Francine was ill. I was led back to prison, but not to solitary confinement, and I could then hope that I might be informed of all the events of which I was so singularly the victim. I questioned the jailor, but he would not answer me; I wrote to Francine, although I was told that the letters would be detained by the judge, and that she was dismissed. I was on thorns, and at last determined on sending for counsel, who, after having learnt the accusation, told me that I was charged with attempting to assassinate Francine. On the very day I left her, she had been found expiring, stabbed with a knife in five places, and bathed in blood. My precipitate flight—the secret carrying away of my clothes, which it was known that I had taken from one place to another, as if to elude the search of justice—the broken shutter in my room—the footmark which resembled mine,—all tended to confirm the suspicions of my guilt, and my disguise still more corroborated it.

It was thought that I only disguised myself and returned, to learn whether she had died without accusing me. One particular, which would have been in my favour under any other circumstances, now aggravaged the charge against me; as soon as the physicians would allow Francine to speak, she declared that she had stabbed herself, in despair, at finding that she was

abandoned by a man for whom she had sacrificed all. But her attachment to me rendered her testimony suspected, and it was believed that she only spoke thus to save me.

My counsel had terminated this narrative at least a quarter of an hour, and I was still listening like a man oppressed with the night-mare. At the age of twenty I was suffering under the weight of the two-fold accusation of forging and assassination, without having even dreamt of committing such crimes. I even reflected whether I would not hang myself at the bars of my cell with a straw rope. I was losing my senses, but at last collected myself sufficiently to detail all the facts requisite for my exculpation. In the after-examination they insisted strongly on the blood which the porter, who had carried my luggage, stated he had seen on my hands. This blood had flowed from a cut inflicted by the glass of a window which I had broken to remove the shutter, and I could produce two witnesses of this fact. My counsel, to whom I told all my grounds of defence, assured me, that united with the testimony of Francine, which alone had been of no avail, I should be acquitted, which was the case a few days afterwards. Francine, although still very weak, came immediately to see me, and confirmed all the particulars which the examination had first acquainted me with.

I was thus relieved of an enormous weight, without being yet entirely freed from uneasiness: my repeated escapes had delayed the decision of the accusation of forgery, in which I had been implicated, and nothing indicated its termination, for Grouard had also escaped. The result of the charge from which I had just been freed, had, however, given me a hope, and I thought nothing of attempting to escape, when an opportunity presented, which I seized, as it were, by instinct. In the chamber in which I was placed, were the temporary prisoners, and on fetching away two of them one morning, the jailor forgot to close the door,

which I perceived, and descending to the ground-floor, found, on looking about me, that I had a chance. It was scarcely daybreak, and the prisoners were all asleep; I had met no one on the staircase, and there was no one at the gate which I cleared; but the jailor, who was drinking a dram at a public-house opposite the prison, pursued me, crying loudly, "Stop him! Stop him!" He cried in vain, for the streets were empty, and the desire of liberty gave me wings. In a few minutes, I got out of sight of the jailor, and soon reached a house in Rue Saint Sauveur, where I was very certain they would not come to seek for me. I was now compelled to quit Lille as quickly as possible, as I was too well known there to be long in safety.

At nightfall, all were on the look out, and I learnt that all the gates were closed, and no one was let out but through the wicket, where police-officers and disguised gendarmes were stationed to examine all comers. The gates thus closed on me, I resolved on descending the ramparts, and knowing the spot well, I went at ten o'clock at night to the bastion of Notre-Dame, which I judged the most propitious place for the execution of my project. Having tied to a tree a cord, which I had procured for the purpose, I began to slide down, but the weight of my body impelling me more rapidly than I anticipated, the friction of the cord made my hands so hot that I was compelled to let go about fifteen feet from the ground, and fell so heavily on my right foot, that I sprained it, and in endeavouring to get out of the ditch I thought I should never be able to effect it. Unheard-of efforts at length extricated me, but on reaching the plain I could move no farther.

There I was, swearing most emphatically against all ditches, ropes, and sprains, but this did not relieve my embarrassment, when a man passed me with one of those cars so common in Flanders. A crown-piece, my only one, prevailed on him to place me on his car,

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and convey me to the next village. On reaching his house he laid me on a bed, and rubbed my foot with brandy and soap, whilst his wife assisted him very efficiently, although staring with wonder at my clothes, stained with the mud of the ditch. They did not ask for any explanation, but I thought it expedient to give one; and to prepare myself for it, I pretended that I was greatly in want of sleep, and my host left me. At the end of two hours I called them, like a man just awaking, and told them in a few words, that in conveying smuggled tobacco up the ramparts, I had fallen, and my comrades, pursued by the custom-house officers, had been compelled to leave me in the ditch; and I added, that I left myself in their hands to do as they pleased with me. These good creatures, who hated the custom-house officers as cordially as the inhabitant of any frontier town ever does, assured me that they would not for the world betray me. To try them, I asked if there was no means of conveyance to my father's house, who lived at the other side, and they said that such a step would expose me, and that it would be better to wait a few days, until I was well. I consented, and to remove all suspicions, it was agreed that I should pass for a relation on a visit. No one, however, made the least observation.

Quieted on this head, I began to reflect on my next step, and what I must do. I determined on leaving these parts, and going into Holland. But to execute this plan money was indispensable, and except my watch, which I had offered to my host, I possessed only four shillings and tenpence. I might go to Francine, but then, of course, she was closely watched; and to send her any message would infallibly hazard her safety. At least, I must wait until the heat of the first pursuit was over. I did wait, and at the end of a fortnight I determined to write to Francine, which I entrusted to my host, telling him that, as this female was the go-between of the smugglers, he must use much

caution in visiting her. He fulfilled his commission with much care, and brought me next day one hundred and twenty francs in gold. The next day I bade farewell to my friends, whose charges were extremely moderate, and at the end of six days reached Ostend.

My intention, as at my first visit to this city, was to go to America or India, but I only met with Danish and Dutch skippers, who refused to take me without credentials. The little cash which I had brought from Lille diminished rapidly, and I was approaching that situation with which we become more or less familiarized, but which is not the less disagreeable on that account. Money certainly does not produce wit, nor talents, nor understanding; but the quiet of mind which it superinduces, the equanimity which it affords, amply supply the place of these qualities; whilst in the absence of this equanimity these gifts are of no avail with many who possess them. The result is, that at the moment when we have most need of all the resources of the invention to procure money, we are deprived of these resources by the very want of the money itself. I was assuredly placed in the latter of these conditions, and yet I must dine—an operation frequently more difficult than may be imagined by those happy mortals who think that appetite can be the only thing lacking.

I had heard much of the adventurous and lucrative life of the coasting smugglers, of whom the prisoners had boasted with enthusiasm; for this profession was often followed through inclination, by individuals whose fortune and situation did not compel them to adopt so perilous a life. I confess, for my part, that I was not seduced by the prospect of passing whole nights under cliffs, in the midst of rocks, exposed to all winds, and above all, to the shots of the custom-house officers.

It was with real repugnance that I went to the house of a man named Peters, to whom I was directed,

as one deeply engaged in the pursuit, and able to introduce me to it. A sea-gull nailed on his door with extended wings, like the owls and weasels that we see on barns, guided me. I found the worthy in a sort of cellar, which by the ropes, sails, oars, hammocks, and barrels, which filled it, might have been taken for a naval depôt. From the midst of a thick atmosphere of smoke which surrounded him, he viewed me at first with a contempt which had not a good appearance, and my conjectures were soon realized, for I had scarcely offered my services than he fell upon me with a shower of blows. I could certainly have resisted him effectually, but astonishment had in a measure deprived me of the power of defence; and I saw besides, in the court-yard, half a dozen sailors and an enormous Newfoundland dog, which would have been powerful odds. Turned into the street, I endeavoured to account for this singular reception, when it occurred to me that Peters had mistaken me for a spy, and treated me accordingly.

This idea determined me on returning to a dealer in hollands, who had told me of him, and he, laughing at the result of my visit, gave me a pass-word that would procure me free access to Peters. Thus empowered, I again went to his formidable abode, having first filled my pockets with large stones, which, in case of a second attack, might protect my retreat. Fortunately I had no need of them. At the words "Beware of the sharks" (custom-house officers), I was received in a most amicable manner, for my strength and activity made me a valuable acquisition to the fraternity, who are often compelled to carry with speed from one spot to another the most oppressive loads. A Bourdeaux man, who was one of the gang, undertook to initiate me, and teach me the stratagems of the profession, which, however, I was called on to put in practice before my tuition had progressed very far.

I slept at Peters's house with a dozen or fifteen smugglers, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Portuguese, and

Russian; there were no Englishmen, and only two Frenchmen. The day after my installation, as we were all getting into our hammocks, or flock beds, Peters entered suddenly into our chamber, which was only a cellar contiguous to his own, and so filled with barrels and kegs that we could scarcely find room to sling our hammocks. Peters had put off his usual attire, which was that of ship-caulker, or sail-maker, and had on a hairy cap, and a long red shirt, closed at the breast with a silver pin, fire-arms in his belt, and a pair of thick large fishermen's boots, which reach the top of the thigh, or may be folded down beneath the knee.

"A-hoy! a-hoy!" cried he, at the door, striking the ground with the butt end of his carbine, "Down with the hammocks, down with the hammocks! We will sleep some other day. The Squirrel has made signals for a landing this evening, and we must see what she has in her, muslin or tobacco. Come, come, turn out my sea-boys."

In a twinkling everybody was ready. They opened an arm-chest, and every man took out a carbine or blunderbuss, a brace of pistols, and a cutlass or boarding pike, and we set out, after having drank so many glasses of brandy and arrack that the bottles were empty. At this time there were not more than twenty of us, but we were joined or met, at one place or another, by so many individuals, that on reaching the sea-side we were forty-seven in number, exclusive of two females and some countrymen from the adjacent villages, who brought hired horses, which they concealed in a hollow behind some rocks.

It was night, and the wind was shifting, whilst the sea dashed with so much force that I did not understand how any vessel could approach without being cast on shore. What confirmed this idea was, that by the starlight I saw a small boat rowing backwards and forwards, as if it feared to land. They told me afterwards that this was only a manœuvre to ascertain

if all was ready for the unloading, and no danger to be apprehended. Peters now lighted a reflecting lanthorn, which one of the men had brought, and immediately extinguished it, the Squirrel raised a lanthorn at her mizen, which only shone for a moment and then disappeared like a glow-worm on a summer's night. We then saw it approach, and anchor about a gun shot off from the spot where we were. Our troop then divided into three companies, two of which were placed five hundred paces in front, to resist the revenue officers if they should present themselves. The men of these companies were then placed at intervals along the ground, having at the left arm a packthread which ran from one to the other: in case of alarm, it was announced by a slight pull, and each being ordered to answer this signal by firing his gun, a line of firing was thus kept up, which perplexed the revenue officers. The third company, of which I was one, remained by the sea-side, to cover the landing and the transport of the cargo.

All being thus arranged, the Newfoundland dog already mentioned, and who was with us, dashed at a word into the midst of the waves and swam powerfully in the direction of the Squirrel, and in an instant afterwards returned with the end of a rope in his mouth. Peters instantly seized it, and began to draw it towards him, making us signs to assist him, which I obeyed mechanically. After a few tugs, I saw that at the end of the cable were a dozen small casks, which floated towards us. I then perceived that the vessel thus contrived to keep sufficiently far from the shore, not to run a risk of being stranded.

In an instant the casks, smeared over with something that made them water-proof, were unfastened and placed on horses, which immediately dashed off for the interior of the country. A second cargo arrived with the same success; but as we were landing the third, some reports of fire-arms announced that our out-posts were attacked. "There is the beginning

of the ball," said Peters, calmly; "I must go and see who will dance;" and taking up his carbine, he joined the out-posts, which had by this time joined each other. The firing became rapid, and we had two men killed, and others slightly wounded. At the fire of the revenue officers, we soon found that they exceeded us in number, but alarmed, and fearing an ambuscade, they dared not to approach, and we effected our retreat without any attempt on their part to prevent it. From the beginning of the fight the Squirrel had weighed anchor and stood out to sea, for fear that the noise of the firing should bring down on her the government cruiser. I was told that most probably she would unload her cargo in some other part of the coast, where the owners had numerous agents.

On the return to Peter's house, at break of day, I threw myself into my hammock, and did not leave it for eight and forty hours: the fatigue of the night, the moisture which penetrated my clothes, whilst exercise had made me perspire profusely, and the uneasiness of my new situation, all combined to make me ill, and a fever seized me. When it left me, I told Peters that I found the employment too hard, and that I should be glad if he would allow me to go. He agreed more quietly than I expected, and gave me a hundred francs. I have since learnt that he had me followed for several days, to be assured whether or no I took the road to Lille, which I had told him was my intention.

I did go to that city, led by a childish wish to see Francine, and take her with me to Holland, where I had formed a plan of a small establishment. But my imprudence was soon punished; for two gendarmes, who were drinking in a pot-house, saw me crossing the street, and they resolved on following me to ask for my papers. They overtook me at a turning, and the trouble which their appearance caused me, determined them on apprehending me. They took me to the brigade prison, where I was already looking out for means of escape, when I heard some one say to

the gendarmes, "Here is the guard of Lille; is there any one for the prison?" Two men of the Lille brigade came to the prison and asked if there was any game in the trap? "Yes," said the fellows who took me, "we have one named Leger (my assumed name) whom we found without a passport." They opened the door, and the brigadier of Lille, who had often seen me at the Petit Hôtel, cried "By Jove, 'tis Vidocq!" I was compelled to confess it, and setting out, I entered Lille a few hours afterwards, between my two body guards.

CHAPTER VI.

The pewter keys—The quacks—Vidocq an hussar—He is retaken—The siege of the dungeon—Sentence—Condemnation.

I FOUND at the Petit Hôtel the greater number of the prisoners who had been emancipated before my escape. Some of them had made but a very short absence, and were speedily apprehended, charged with fresh crimes, or fresh offences. Amongst them was Calandrin, of whom I have spoken about: enlarged on the 11th, he was retaken on the 13th, charged with burglary, and being an accomplice of the Chauffeurs, whose name alone inspired universal dread. On the strength of the reputation which my various escapes had procured for me, these men looked on me as one on whom they might rely. On my side, I could scarcely separate myself from them. Accused of capital offences, they had a powerful motive for being secret concerning our attempts, whilst the unfortunate "petty larceny rascal" might denounce us, in the dread of being accused of being privy to our designs. This is the logic of the prison. This escape, however, was

not so very easy a matter as may be surmised, when I say that our dungeons, seven feet square, had walls six feet thick, strengthened with planking crossed and rivetted with iron; a window, two feet by one, closed with three iron gratings placed one after the other, and the door cased with wrought iron. With such precautions, a jailor might depend on the safe keeping of his charge, but yet we overcame it all.

I was in a cell on the second floor with Duhamel. For six francs, a prisoner, who was also a turnkey, procured us two files, a ripping chisel, and two turnscrews. We had pewter spoons, and our jailor was probably ignorant of the use which prisoners could make of them. I knew the dungeon key; it was the counterpart of all the others on the same story; and I cut a model of it from a large carrot; then I made a mould with crumb of bread and potatoes. We wanted fire, and we procured it by making a lamp with a piece of fat and the rags of a cotton cap. The key was at last made of pewter, but it was not yet perfect; and it was only after many trials and various alterations that it fitted at last. Thus masters of the doors, we were compelled to work a hole in the wall, near the barns of the town-hall. Sallambier, who was in the dungeons below, found a way to cut the hole, by working through the planking. All was ready for our escape, and it was fixed for the evening, when the jailor told me that my term of dungeon imprisonment had expired, and I should be placed again with the other prisoners.

A favour was never less welcome; I saw all my preparations useless, and I might wait for a long time for circumstances as favourable. I was however compelled to follow the jailor, whom I wished at the devil with his congratulations. This disappointment affected me so greatly that all the prisoners saw it. One of them having learnt my secret from me, made some very just observations on the danger I ran in escaping with such men as Sallambier and Duhamel,

who would perhaps not be out of prison twenty-four hours without committing a murder. He even made me promise to let them go, and wait myself for some other opportunity. I followed his advice, and it was well that I did so; I even took the precaution of telling Duhamel and Sallambier that they were suspected, and that they had not a moment to spare in saving themselves. They followed my advice literally, and two hours afterwards they had joined a band of forty-seven Chauffeurs, of whom twenty-eight were executed the following month at Bruges.

The escape of Duhamel and Sallambier made a great noise in the prison, and throughout the city. They found some extraordinary circumstances belonging to it, but the jailor was the more astonished that I had not made one of the party. It was necessary to repair the breach they had made, and workmen came; and they stationed at the bottom of the staircase a guard with orders not to let any one pass. The thought came to me of deceiving the sentinel, and getting out by the breach which was to have aided my escape before.

Francine, who came every day to see me, brought me three ells of tri-coloured ribbon, which I had requested her to procure. With one piece I made a belt, and ornamenting my hat with the rest, I passed, muffled up, by the soldier: who, taking me for a municipal officer, presented his arms. I ascended the staircase quickly—reached the opening, which I found guarded by two centinels, one in the granary of the town-hall, and the other in the passage of the prison. I told the latter that it was impossible for a man to pass through this opening: he insisted on the contrary; and his comrade, as if plotting with me, said that I could get through with my clothes on. I said I would try: and creeping through the hole I got into the barn. Pretending that I had hurt myself in passing, I told my two men that as I was on that side I should go round by another way. "In this case," said he,

who was in the granary, "wait whilst I open the door;" and putting the key in the lock, I jumped at two bounds down the stair-case of the town-hall and got into the street with my ribbon still on, and which would again have caused my arrest had not the day been drawing to a close.

I was scarcely out, when the jailor, who rarely lost sight of me said, "Where is Vidocq?" They told him that I was taking a turn in the yard; but when he went there to convince himself, he sought me every where in vain, calling loudly over all parts of the prison (an official search would not have been more successful), no prisoner had seen me go out. It was soon known that I was no longer in the prison; but how then could I have escaped? Of this no one knew anything—not even Francine, who most ingenuously declared that she knew nothing of how I had liberated myself, for she had brought me the ribbon without knowing the purpose for which I intended it. She was however confined; but this revealed nothing, the soldiers, who had allowed me to pass, taking good care not to implicate themselves.

Whilst they were thus punishing the pretended authors of my escape, I left the city and reached Courtrai, where the juggler Olivier and the quack Devoye enrolled me in their troop to play pantomime. I saw there many prisoners who had escaped, whose acting costume, which they always wore (because they had no other) served greatly to mystify the police. From Courtrai we returned to Ghent, whence we were soon to depart for the fair of Enghien. We were in this latter city for five days: and the receipt, of which I had a share, was very good; when one evening, as I was about to go on the stage, I was arrested by the police officers, to whom I had been betrayed by the Merry Andrew, out of malice at seeing me fill the chief characters. I was again taken back to Lille, where I learnt, to my great grief, that my poor Francine had been sentenced to six months' confinement for having

aided my escape. The turnkey Baptiste—whose only crime was that of having taken me for a superior officer, and having allowed me in this capacity to quit St Peter's Tower—the unlucky Baptiste was also imprisoned for the same fault. The terrible charge against him was, that the prisoners (overjoyed at an opportunity of revenging themselves) declared that a hundred crowns had made him take a young man of nineteen for an old soldier on the shady side of fifty.

As for me, I was sent to the prison of the department of Douai, where I was treated as a dangerous man; that is to say, I was thrust into a dungeon with my hands and legs in fetters. I found there my townsman Desfosseux and a young man named Doyenette, condemned to chains for sixteen years for a burglary effected with his father, mother, and two brothers under fifteen years of age. They had been four months in the dungeon where I was put, lying on straw, eaten up with vermin, and living on bean-bread and water. I ordered my provisions, which were soon consumed; we then talked over our business, and my fellow prisoners told me that for the last fortnight they were making a hole under the pavement of the dungeon which would open at the level of the Scarpe which washed the prison walls. I at first regarded the enterprise as difficult, as it was necessary to pierce a wall five feet thick and yet avoid the observation of the jailor, whose frequent visits would not allow of our suffering a morsel of rubbish to be seen.

We eluded detection from this by throwing out of the window, which overlooked the Scarpe, every handful of rubbish that we got from our mine. Desfosseux had besides found means of ridding us of our fetters, and we worked with less fatigue and difficulty. One of us was always in the hole, which was already large enough to admit a man. We thought that we had at length terminated our labours and our captivity, when we discovered that the foundations, which we had imagined to be composed of common stone, were

formed of masses of sand-stone of large size. This compelled us to enlarge our subterranean gallery, and for a week we worked at it unremittingly. To conceal the disappearance of that one of us who might be at work when the guard went round, we had filled a vest and shirt with straw and placed the figure in the posture of a sleeping man.

After fifty-five days and nights of unrelaxing toil, we at last so far completed our work that we had but one stone to remove and then should reach the river's banks. One night we determined on making an essay, and all appeared favourable to our design; the jailor had locked up earlier than usual, and a dense fog gave us a confident hope of avoiding the sentinel of the bridge. The shaken stone yielded to our efforts, and fell inside the aperture we had made; but the water followed it at the same time as if impelled by the sluice of a mill. We had calculated our distance incorrectly, and the hole being made some feet beneath the level of the river, we were soon deluged. At first we endeavoured to plunge through the opening; but the rapidity of the current precluded all attempts, and we were compelled to call for help, or remain immersed in water for the whole night. At our cries the jailor and turnkeys ran to our assistance, and were greatly astonished at finding themselves mid-leg deep in water. All was soon discovered and the mischief repaired, whilst we were shut up singly in dungeons in the same gallery.

This catastrophe filled me with very sad reflections, from which I was very soon aroused by the voice of Desfosseux, who told me, in slang terms, not to despair, but to take courage by his example. Desfosseux was certainly endowed with a strength of mind which nothing could depress: cast half naked on the straw in a dungeon, where he could scarcely lie at length, loaded with thirty pounds weight of fetters, he yet sang with great vociferation, and was only devising means of escape, that he might again do some evil deed; and opportunity was not long wanting.

In the same prison with us were confined the jailor of the Petit Hôtel of Lille, and the turnkey Baptiste, both accused of having aided my escape for a bribe. The day of their trial having arrived, the jailor was acquitted, but Baptiste's sentence was deferred, the tribunal having decreed a fresh process, in which I was to be heard. Poor Baptiste then came to me, begging me to tell the truth. At first I only gave him evasive answers; but Desfosseux having told me that the man might serve us, and that we must arrange terms with him, I promised to do what he wished: on which he made me vast professions of gratitude and offers of service. I took him at his word, and desired him to bring me a knife and two large nails, of which Desfosseux had told me that he had need, and in an hour I had them brought to me. On learning that I had procured them, Desfosseux made as many jumps as his fetters and his bounded space would allow: Doyenette equally gave himself up to the most excessive joy; and, as gaiety is in general catching, I felt myself too in a mirthful mood, without exactly knowing why.

When these transports had a little subsided, Desfosseux desired me to look at the roof of my dungeon and observe if there were not five stones whiter than the rest: and on my replying in the affirmative, he desired me to try the divisions with the point of my knife, which I did, and found that the cement had been replaced by crumb of bread, whitened with scraping: and Desfosseux told me that the prisoner, who had been there before me, had done this to remove the stones and save himself, when he had been taken to another part of the prison. I thus transferred the knife to Desfosseux, who employed himself with activity in opening a passage to my dungeon, when we were served similarly to my predecessor. The jailor having got wind of something, changed our dungeons, and placed us all three in a dungeon next to the Scarpe, where we were chained together: so that the least

movement of one of us was communicated to the others, a horrid punishment when prolonged, and which ends in a total deprivation of sleep. At the end of two days Desfosseux, seeing us dejected, resolved on using a means which he only resorted to on desperate occasions, and which he reserved as the preparatory steps towards escape.

Like many of the galley-slaves he carried secretly about him a case full of files with which he set to work, and in less than three hours our fetters fell off, we cast them through the grating into the river. The jailor coming to visit us the moment after to see if we were quiet, almost fell backwards at finding us freed from our irons, and asked us what we had done with them: to which we only replied with jokes. The inspector of the prison arriving, together with an attendant bailiff named Hurtrel, we were compelled to undergo a fresh examinatiou: and Desfosseux, who was much irritated, said, "You ask for our fetters? Well, the worms have eaten them, and will eat as many as you may load us with."—The inspector then suspecting that we had the famous herb which cuts iron, which no botanist has ever yet discovered, ordered us to strip and be examined from head to foot, and then again loaded us with irons, which were again cut off the following night; for the precious case was not discovered. This time we reserved to ourselves the pleasure of throwing them on the ground in the presence of the inspector and Hurtrel the bailiff, who did not know what to think of it. The report spread through the city that there was in the prison a conjuror who took fetters off by only touching them. To cut short all these accounts, and particularly to avoid drawing the attention of the other prisoners to means of getting rid of their chains, the public accuser gave an order to shut us up and watch us with particular care—a recommendation which did not prevent us from quitting Douai sooner than they expected, or than we ourselves had the least idea of.

Twice a week we had leave to consult our counsel in the gallery, of which one door led to the court of justice, and I contrived to get an impression of the lock; Desfosseux made a key, and one fine day, whilst my counsel was engaged with another client, accused of two murders, we all three got out without being seen. Two other gates, which opposed us, were broken open in a twinkling, and the prison was soon left behind us. But yet I was uneasy: six francs was our whole stock, and we could not get far with such a sum; which I told my companions, who looked at each other with a sinister smile: and on my repeating my observation, they told me that on the next night they intended to enter a house in the neighbourhood with which they were well acquainted.

I had no intention of turning housebreaker, any more than when I was amongst the Bohemiens. I had profitted by the experience of Desfosseux in escaping, but never contemplated uniting myself with such a villain: and yet I was not desirous of entering into any explanation. By evening we had reached a village on the road to Cambrai; we had not eaten since our escape from prison, and were sorely pressed by hunger. It was absolutely necessary to get provisions in the village. The half-naked appearance of my companions might give rise to suspicion, and it was agreed that I should go for the food. I went to a public-house, where, after having taken some bread and brandy, I went out by a different door from that at which I had entered, directing my steps in the opposite direction to that in which I had left the two men whose company I was so greatly desirous of getting rid of. I walked all night, and only stopped at break of day to sleep a few hours on a hay-stack.

Four days afterwards I reached Compeigne, on my way to Paris, where I trusted to find some means of existence until my mother could send me some succour. At Louvres, meeting a regiment of black hussars, I asked the quarter-master if I could enter, but he told

me that they did not enlist; and the lieutenant, to whom I afterwards applied, gave me the same reply, but touched by the embarrassment of my situation, he agreed to keep me to clean the extra horses which he was going to procure at Paris. A cap of a police officer and an old cloak which was given to me, enabled me to clear the barrier unquestioned, and I went to the military school with the detachment, which I afterwards accompanied to the depôt, at Guise. On arriving in this city I was presented to the colonel, who, although suspecting me to be a deserter, engaged me under the name of Lannoy, which I assumed without being able to justify by any credentials. Concealed by my new uniform, and mingling with the rank of a numerous regiment, I thought myself secure, and begun to think of making my way as a soldier, when an unfortunate accident again befel me.

On entering the barrack one morning I met a gendarme who had left Douai for Guise. He had so frequently seen me, that he knew me at first sight and called to me. We were in the midst of the street, and thoughts of escape were useless, I therefore went up to him and boldly feigned to be glad to see him. He replied to me, but with an air that seemed to augur me no good. Whilst thus together, a hussar of my squadron, seeing me with the gendarme, approached, and said to me, "Well, Lannoy, what are you doing with the round hats?" "Lannoy," said the gendarme with astonishment. "Yes, it is a *nom de guerre*." "Oh, we will see about that," said he, seizing my collar. I was compelled to follow him to prison, and my identity being confirmed, in opposition to my statements at the regiment, I was by a cursed chance again sent to Douai.

This sentence completely overpowered me, and the intelligence that reached me at Douai was not calculated to set me at rest. I heard that Grouard, Herbaux, Stofflet, and Boitel, had decided by lot, that one of them should confess the execution of the forgery, but

as this forgery could only be the work of one person, they determined on accusing me, thus punishing me for what I had said of them at my last examination; and I learnt besides that the prisoner who could have corroborated my statement, was dead. If anything could console me, it was that I had escaped in time from Desfosseux and Doyennette, who had been taken four days after our escape with their booty about them, in a mercer's shop in Ponte-a-Marcq. I soon saw them, and as they were astonished at my abrupt departure, I told them that the arrival of a gendarme at the public-house where I was purchasing provisions, had compelled me to fly with speed. Again united, we formed new plans of escape, which the approach of our trials rendered of great importance to us.

One evening a convoy of prisoners arrived, four of whom, ironed, were placed with us. They were the brothers Duhesme, rich farmers of Bailleul, where they had enjoyed the best reputation, until an unexpected accident unfolded their real characters. These four persons, men of powerful strength, were at the head of a band of Chauffeurs, who had struck terror into the vicinity, without any person being able to identify them. The prattling of a little girl of one of the Duhesme's at last exposed the affair. This child, chatting at a neighbour's house, said that she had been very much frightened the night before. "And with what?" said the curious neighbour. "Oh, papa came home again with the black men." "The black men?" "Yes, the men who go out with papa every night and come home in the day time and count out money; my mother lights the candle, and my aunt Genevieve also, because my uncles are amongst the black men. I asked my mother one day what it was all about, and she said, Be discreet my child, your father has a black hen who finds him in money, but it is only at night, and that he should not scare it, he makes his face as black as her feathers. Be silent, for if you tell anybody what you have seen, the

black hen will never come again." We may easily divine that it was not to visit the mysterious hen that the Duhesmes blackened their faces with smoke. The neighbour, who guessed as much, communicated her suspicion to her husband, who, in his turn, questioned the little girl, and convinced that the favourites of the black hen were Chauffeurs, he made a deposition, and on measures being taken, the band was apprehended, all disguised, as they were about to sally out on an expedition.

The youngest Duhesme had, in the sole of his shoe, a knife-blade, which he had contrived to conceal on the road from Bailleul to Douai. Being told that I knew the way of the prison, he communicated this to me, asking me if it were not possible to effect an escape with its assistance. I was reflecting about it, when a justice of the peace, attended by gendarmes, came to make a strict search throughout our room, and about our persons. No one amongst us knowing the reason of this, I thought it prudent to hide in my mouth a small file which I had always about me, but one of the gendarmes having watched me, cried "He is going to swallow it!" "Swallow what?" Everybody looked, and we then learnt that they wanted to find the seal which had served to stamp the forged order for Boitel's liberation. Suspected, as we have just learnt, of having got it, I was transferred to the prison of the Town Hall, and thrust in a dungeon so chained that my right hand was confined to my left leg, and my left hand to my right leg. The dungeon was moreover so damp, that in twenty minutes the straw which they had thrown me was as wet as if it had been dipped in water.

I remained eight days in this frightful state, and when they found that it was impossible I could have got rid of the seal in the way suspected, I was ordered to the usual prison. On learning this intelligence, I pretended, as is often done under such circumstances, to be exceedingly weak and scarcely able to bear the

light of day. The unwholesome state of the dungeon made this very probable, and the gendarmes fell completely into the snare and carried their complaisance so far as to cover my eyes with a handkerchief, and then deposited me in a hackney-coach. On the road I took off the handkerchief and opening the door, with a dexterity never yet surpassed, and jumped out into the street, the gendarmes sought to follow, but impeded by their sabres and jack boots, they had scarcely got out of the carriage when I was at a considerable distance. I quitted the city instantly, and resolved on embarking, I reached Dunkirk with some money which my mother had transmitted to me. I there made friends with the supercargo of a Swedish brig, who promised to get me a berth on board.

Whilst waiting for orders to sail, my new friend proposed that I should accompany him to Saint Omer, where he was going to get a large quantity of biscuit. I did not fear recognition in my sailor's clothes, and agreed, as it was impossible to refuse a man to whom I was under such great obligations. I went with him, but my turbulent character would not allow me to remain quiet in a pot-house row, and I was arrested as a riotous fellow and taken to the watch-house. There they asked for my papers, of which I had none, and my answers inducing a belief that I might be an escaped prisoner, they sent me the next day to the central prison of Douai, without allowing me to bid adieu to the supercargo, who was doubtlessly much surprised at this occurrence. At Douai they put me once more in the prison of the Town Hall, where at first the jailor evinced much kindness towards me, which did not however last. At the termination of a quarrel with the turnkeys, in which I took too active a part, I was thrown into a dark cell under the tower. There were five of us, one of whom, a deserter sentenced to death, was talking of nothing but suicide, until I desired him not to think of that, but rather devise means of escape from this dismal hole, where the rats, which ran about like rab-

bits in a corn field, eat our bread and bit our faces whilst we slept. With a bayonet, stolen from one of the soldiers of the national guard who did duty at the prison, we commenced working a hole in the wall, in a direction in which we heard a cobbler hammering his leather. In ten days, and as many nights, we penetrated six feet in depth and seemed to get nearer the cobbler's hammer. On the eleventh day, in the morning, on drawing out a brick, I saw daylight from a window which looked into the street, and gave light to a place where the jailor kept some rabbits.

This discovery inspired us with fresh courage, and the evening visit being concluded, we took from the hole all the loosened bricks, of which there were two courses, and placed them behind the dungeon door, which opened inwards, so as to barricade it, and then set to work with so much industry, that daylight surprised us, when the hole, six feet large at the opening, was only two feet at the end. The jailor came with our allowances, and finding some resistance, opened the wicket, and saw the high pile of bricks, to his great astonishment. He desired us to open the door, and on our refusal the guard came, then the commissary of the prison, then the public accuser, then the municipal officers clothed with the tri-colored scarves. We held a parley, and during this time one of us continued working at the hole, which the darkness did not disclose. We might perhaps escape before the door was forced, when an unexpected event deprived us of our last hope.

The jailor's wife, in going to feed the rabbits, had observed rubbish scattered on the floor. In a prison, nothing is indifferent, and she carefully examined the wall, and although the bricks had been so replaced as to conceal the hole, she yet saw that they had been separated; and on calling for the guard, with a blow from the butt end of a musket, our bricks were knocked out and we were discovered. On both sides they called to us to clear the door-way, or they would fire on us.

Entrenched behind the materials, we answered that the first who entered should be knocked on the head with bricks and irons. So much determination alarmed the authorities, and they left us for a few hours to calm ourselves. At noon, a municipal officer appeared at the wicket, which as well as the hole had been sedulously guarded, and offered us an amnesty, which we accepted, but scarcely had we removed our *chevaux-de-frise*, when they attacked us with the butt end of muskets, flat side of sabres, and bunches of keys, even the jailor's mastiff joined the party: he jumped at me and bit me most severely all over. They then led us into the court yard, where a body of fifteen men held us, lying on our faces, whilst they rivetted our fetters. This job done, they cast me into a dungeon yet more horrible than that I had left, and it was not till the next day that the surgeon Dutilleul, (now keeper at the hospital of St Maudé) came to dress the bites and bruises which covered me.

I had scarcely recovered from this when the day of trial came, which my repeated escapes and those of Grouard, who fled just as I was retaken, had deferred for eight months. The trial began, and I saw that I was lost; my companions accused me with an animosity, explained by my retarded confessions, which were useless to myself, and had not at all injured them. Boitel declared that I had asked him how much I would give to get out of prison. Herbaux confessed that he had forged the order, but not added the signatures, and said besides that I had persuaded him to forge it, and then taken it from him without his thinking it of the least importance. The jury thought that nothing indicated that I had materially aided the crime; all the charge against me was confined to allegations without proof, that I had furnished the seal. However, Boitel, who remembered having begged for the forged order; Stofflet, who had brought it to the jailor; Grouard, who had at least assisted at the whole operation, were acquitted; whilst Herbaux and I were condemned to

eight years' imprisonment. This was the termination of the sentence, which I subjoin accurately, in reply to the tales which malevolence and stupidity have circulated. Some say that I was sentenced to death for numerous murders; others state that I had long been chief of a band which robbed the diligences; the most moderate state that I was condemned to perpetual labour at the gallies for robbery and housebreaking; and it has been asserted that I (at a later period) incited wretches to crime that I might show my vigilance in pouncing upon them; as if there were not a sufficient number of the really guilty. Certainly false comrades, as are everywhere found, even amongst robbers, sometimes instructed me in the plans of their accomplices: certainly to confirm the intent whilst we prevented the crime, it was sometimes necessary to allow of a partial commission of the deed, for experienced rogues are never caught but in the very act: and I ask, is there anything in this which has the appearance of an inducement to do ill. This imputation emanated from the police, amongst whom I have some enemies; but the imputation fails before the publicity of judicial facts, which would not have failed in revealing the infamies with which I am charged; and it also fails before the operations of the brigade of safety, which I directed. It is not when proof is given that we have recourse to deception, and the confidence of the clever men who have preceded M. Delavau, in the office of chief magistrate, will acquit me of such wretched expedients. "He is a lucky fellow," said, one day, the police officers who had failed in an enterprise in which I succeeded, to M. Angles. "Well," said he, turning his back on them, "Do you be lucky fellows too."

Parricide is the only crime of which I have not been charged, and yet I declare that I never was sentenced to, nor underwent, but the sentence which I here subjoin. My pardon will prove this; and when I assert that I never aided in this miserable forgery, I should be believed, for it was at last but a prison joke, which, if

proved, would at present only subject the offender to a sentence of corporal punishment. But it was not the suspected accomplice in a foolish forgery that was to be punished; it was the disorderly, rebellious and impudent prisoner, the chief of so many plans of escape, of whom an example must be made, and I was sacrificed.

"SENTENCE.

"*In the name of the* FRENCH REPUBLIC, *one and indivisible.*

"It appears, by the criminal tribunal of the department of the north, that the act of accusation made the twenty-eighth Vendemaire, in the 5th year, against certain men; namely, Sebastien Boitel, aged about forty, a labourer, living at Annoulin; César Herbaux, aged twenty, ci-devant serjeant-major in the chasseurs of Vandamme, living at Lille; Jean François Grouard, aged nineteen years and a half, second conductor of the military transports, living at Lille; Eugène Stofflet, aged twenty-three years, a broker, living at Lille; and François Vidocq, a native of Arras, aged twenty-two years, living at Lille; charged with forgery of a public and authentic document, by the director of the jury of the division of Cambrai, in manner following:

"The undersigned, judge of the civil tribunal of the department of the north, exercising the functions of director of the jury of the division of Cambrai, for formal indictments, states, that by virtue of a judgment given the seventh Fructidor last, by the criminal tribunal of the department of the north, superseding and annulling the acts of accusation, drawn up the twentieth and twenty-sixth of last Germinal, by the director of the jury of the division of Lille, charged the hereinnamed César Herbaux, François Vidocq, Sebastien Boitel, Eugène Stofflet, and Brice Coquelle, prisoners now present, and André Bordereau, prisoner, absent, with the crime of forging a public and authentic docu-

ment, to procure the escape of the said Sebastien Boitel, from the house of confinement, called St Peter's Tower, at Lille, where he was confined; and particularly the said Brice Coquelle, with having, by means of this forgery, allowed the escape of the prisoner entrusted to his care, as jailor of the said house of confinement. All the charges, together with the necessary papers, would have been sent to the undersigned to be submitted to a new indictment, but on the examination of the said papers it was discovered that the said Jean François Grouard, detained in the house of confinement, called St Peter's Tower, implicated in the charge, had been omitted by the director of the beforementioned jury, whereupon, on the orders of the commissioner of the executive power, and by virtue of an order of the twenty-fourth Fructidor, a decree was issued against the said Grouard, and thereupon, after having heard a decree of sentence, as being concerned in the said forging; that no plaintiff appearing in the two days of the remand of the accused to the house of confinement in this division, the undersigned proceeded with the examination of the papers relative to the causes of the detention and arrest of all the accused. That having corroborated the charges of the crimes of which they were respectively accused, it was found that the offences were of a nature to deserve severe and notorious punishment, and consequently, having consulted the commissioner of the executive power, he has this day passed a decree, by which he has ordered all the said defendants before a special jury of accusation, and by virtue of the decree, the undersigned has drawn up the present act of accusation to be, after the formalities required by law, presented to the said jury:

"The undersigned declares, that in consequence, there resulted from the examination of the papers, and particularly the indictment drawn up by the clerk of the tribunal of peace of the fourth section of the commune of Lille, the nineteenth of Nivose last, and

the ninth and twenty-fourth Prairial following, by the justice of the peace for the south, of the commune of Douai (which indictment is hereunto annexed.)

"That the said Sebastian Boitel, a prisoner in the house of confinement, called St Peter's Tower, at Lille, had been set at liberty by virtue of a forged order from the committee of legislation, and the tribunal of Cassation, dated at Paris, the twentieth Brumaire, in the fourth year of the republic, signed Carnot, Lesage-Cenault, and Le Coindre, at the back of which was the seal of the representative of the people Talot, addressed to the said Brice Coquelle; that this order and seal, which the latter used for his own purpose, were not those of the committee of legislation and the said representative Talot; and thence it is proved that this order and seal are a forgery of a public and authentic document, and that the forgery was evident on the slightest inspection, inasmuch as it was intituled 'Order of the Committee of Legislation, Tribunal of Cassation;' a ridiculous title, confounding, in one and the same authority, two distinct authorities.

"That the ninth Prairial last, there was found in one of the dungeons of the house of confinement at Douai, a brass seal without a top, hid at the foot of a bed; that the said Vidocq had slept there previously; that the seal is the same as that which was found attached to the forged order, and presents a precisely similar impression; that, after the visit of the said judge of the south of Douai, made on the day before, from the dungeon in which the said Vidocq then was, they heard, on turning over the straw bed, something fall, sounding like brass or silver; that Vidocq threw himself on it, and managed to withdraw what had fallen, and to substitute in its place a piece of a file which he produced; that he had been seen previously with the seal by the said Herbaux and Stofflet, to whom he had confessed having been lieutenant of the battalion of which the seal bore the name.

"That the said Herbaux, François Vidocq, Sebas-

tien Boitel, Eugène Stofflet, Brice Coquelle, André Bordereau, and Jean François Grouard, are charged with being the authors and contrivers of the said forgery, and having thereby effected the escape of the said Sebastien Boitel, from the house of confinement where he had been confined, by virtue of a sentence of condemnation to imprisonment.

"That the said Brice Coquelle is, besides, charged with having, by means of this false order, allowed to escape from the said house of confinement the said Sebastien Boitel, committed to his custody, as jailor of the said prison; that the said Brice Coquelle was convicted before the jury at Lille, of having set at liberty the said Sebastien Boitel, the third Frimaire last, by virtue of the forged order.

"That this paper was conveyed to him by Stofflet, who carried it to him, and who was recognised before the judge as having been the bearer of it; that the said Stofflet had been at the prison five or six times in the space of ten days, and always enquired for Herbaux, with whom he remained for two or three hours; that Herbaux and Boitel were together in the same prison, and that the said Stofflet spoke equally to one as to the other; that the pretended order was addressed to him, and that he could not suspect the forgery, not knowing the signature; that the said Stofflet confessed that he was suspected of having carried a letter to St Peter's Tower, but that it was a forgery; that he had been many times at the house of confinement to speak to the said Herbaux, but had never taken any letters to him, and that Brice Coquelle had asserted falsely in saying that he had recognized him before the judge, as having brought him the forged order, by virtue of which he had set Sebastien Boitel at liberty.

"That François Vidocq had declared that he only knew Boitel in prison; that he knew he had left by virtue of an order brought to Coquelle, who was drinking with the brothers of Coquelle and Prevôt,

another prisoner, that he had been to sup with them at the cabaret of Dordreck, and that Coquelle and Prévôt had not returned till midnight; that he declared to the judge at Douai, that the seal found at the foot of the bed did not come from him; that he had not served in the battalion of which the seal bore the name, and did not know whether this battalion had been incorporated into one of those in which he had served; that if he made any resistance at the visit to his dungeon, it was in consequence of the piece of file which he had, fearing that it might create a suspicion that he would use it to loosen his fetters.

"That the said Boitel had stated that he had been sentenced to St Peter's Tower in consequence of a sentence to six years' imprisonment; that he well remembered that one day Herbaux and Vidocq had asked him how much he would give to be set at liberty; that he promised them twelve louis, and gave them seven, promising the remainder when he was at home; that he went out of prison with his two brothers and Brice Coquelle; that he had been with them to the Dordreck, to drink some wine, until ten o'clock in the evening: that he well knew that he had got out of prison through a false order, forged by Vidocq and Herbaux, but that he did not know by whom it had been brought.

"That the said Grouard had declared, in presence of the undersigned, that he knew of the liberation of the said Boitel, by virtue of a superior order; that after his going away he had seen the said order; that he had suspected it to be a forgery, and thought he recognized the writing of Herbaux; and that as for himself, he did not at all assist, either in the sending away Boitel or in the fabrication of the forgery.

"That the said Herbaux declared to the undersigned, that being with Vidocq and the other prisoners, they were conversing about Boitel; that the said Vidocq defied him to draw up an order by which the liberation of Boitel could be effected; that he ac-

cepted the challenge, and took the first paper that came to hand and made the order in question, without putting any signature to it; that he left it on the table; that Vidocq obtained it, and that it is the same order through which Boitel's escape was effected.

"That as to André Bordereau, not apprehended, it appears that he must have known of the forgery, because the day Boitel got out of prision he went to deliver a letter to Stofflet from Herbaux, and the day after Bortel's escape he visited him at Annoulin, whither Boitel had fled.

"It results from all these details, attested by the said documents and indictments, that a forgery of a public and authentic paper has been committed; and that by virtue of this forgery the said Sebastien Boitel escaped from the house of confinement called St Peter's Tower, at Lille, where he was confined under custody of the jailor; that this escape took place the third Frimare last; a double crime, on which, according to the penal code, the jury will have to decide, if there be any accusation against the said Boitel, Stofflet, Vidocq, Coquelle, Grouard, Herbaux, and Bordereau, by reason of the offences committed, mentioned in this indictment.

"Given at Cambrai, the twenty-eighth Vendemiaire, in the fifth of the Republic, one and indivisible."

(Signed) "NOLEKERICK."

"The declaration of the jury of the criminal court of the division of Cambrai from the sixth Brumaire to the fifteenth, written below the indictment, and stating that there is a criminal charge made out as mentioned in the said indictment.

"The order of seizure, made by the director of the jury of the said division the same day, against the said Sebastien Boitel, César Herbaux, Eugène Stofflet, François Grouard, and François Vidocq.

"The procès-verbal of the return of these persons

to the court of justice of the department, the twenty-first of last Brumaire.

" And the declaration of the special jury of judgment, the same date, stating:—

" 1st, That the forgery mentioned by the indictment is made out.

" 2d, That César Herbaux, accused, is convicted of having committed this forgery.

" 3d, That he is convicted of having committed it designedly, and with an intent to do wrong.

" 4th, That François Vidocq is convicted of having committed this forgery.

" 5th, That he is convicted of having committed it designedly, and with an intent to do wrong.

" 6th, That it is proved that the said forgery has been committed on a public and authentic paper.

" 7th, That Sebastien Boitel, accused, is not convicted of having by gifts and presents incited the guilty person or persons to commit the said forgery.

" 8th, That Eugène Stofflet is not convicted of having aided and assisted the guilty person or persons, either with the means which prepared, or the facilities which aided the execution of the said forgery, or in the act itself which consummated the deed.

" 9th, That Jean François Grouard is not convicted of having aided and assisted the guilty person or persons, either with the means which prepared, or the facilities which aided the execution of the said forgery, or in the act itself which consummated the deed.

" In consequence of the said declaration, the president pronounced, in conformity with the four hundred and twenty-fourth article of the law, from the third of Brumaire to the fourth, code of crimes and punishment, that the said Sebastien Boitel, Eugène Stofflet, and Jean François Grouard, are and remain acquitted of the charge laid to them; and the guardian of the house of justice of the department is ordered to set them free immediately, unless they be detained for any other reason.

" The tribunal having heard the commissioner of the executive power, and the citizen Despres, counsel for the prisoners, sentences François Vidocq and César Herbaux to the punishment of the galleys for eight years, conformably to the forty-fourth article of the second section of the second chapter of the second part of the penal code, which has been read, and which runs thus :—

" If the said crime of forgery is committed on a public and authentic paper, the punishment shall be eight years at the galleys.

" Ordered, conformably with the twenty-eighth article of the first chapter of the penal code, which has also been read, and runs thus :—

" ' Whoever shall have been condemned to the punishment of irons, imprisonment in the house of correction, to the rack, to confinement, before undergoing the sentence shall be first led to the public square of the city, where the criminal jury have been summoned, and shall then be tied to a post, placed on a scaffold, and shall remain there exposed to the gaze of the populace for six hours, if he be condemned to irons or solitary confinement; for four hours if he be condemned to the rack; for two hours if he be condemned to imprisonment; over his head, on a board shall be inscribed in large characters, his name, profession, residence, cause of his sentence, and judgment passed on him.'

" And by the four hundred and forty-fifth article of the law of the third and fourth Brumaire, code of crimes and punishments, which has been read and runs thus :—' The exposure shall be made in one of the public places of the commune, where the criminal tribunal holds its sittings.'

" That the said François Vidocq and César Herbaux shall be exposed for six hours on a scaffold, which shall be for that purpose erected on the public square of this commune.

" Ordered, that with all speed of the commissaries

of the executive power, this sentence be carried into effect.

" Given and pronounced at Douai, at the sitting of the criminal tribunal of the department of the North, the seventh Nivose, fifth year of the French Republic, one and indivisible; present, the citizens Delaetre, president; Havyn, Ricquet, Reat, and Legrand, judges, who signed the minutes of this said sentence.

" We command and order all officers on this our requisition, to carry the said sentence into effect; to our attorney-general and our officers at the inferior tribunals to give all requisite aid; to all commandants and their officers of the public departments to render all necessary assistance when they shall be legally called upon for the same.

" By virtue of which, the present judgment has been signed by the president of the court, and by the clerk. With all speed,

(Signed) " LEPOINE, clerk."

On the margin is written: " Registered at Douai, the sixteenth Prairal, thirteenth year, folio 67 (back of the leaf) second case, received five francs, namely, two francs for as many sentences, three francs for as many discharges, and fifty centimes for charge on all.

(Signed) " DEMAG."

On the margin of the first part is written: " By a judge of the superior tribunal of the division of Bethune, conformably with the two hundred and thirty-seventh article of the civil code, and by the procès-verbal of this day, thirtieth Prairal, year thirteen, supplying the place of the absent president, reference approved.

(Signed) " DELDICQUE."

CHAPTER VII.

Departure from Douai—The prisoners revolt in the forest of Compeigne—Residence at the Bicêtre—Prison customs—The madhouse.

Worn out by the bad treatment of every species which I experienced in the prison of Douai, tormented by a watchfulness redoubled after my sentence, I took care not to make an appeal, which would keep me there some months. What confirmed me in my resolution was, the information that the prisoners were to be sent forthwith to the Bicêtre, and there, making one chain, to be sent on to the Bagne at Brest. It is unnecessary to say, that I relied on escaping on our route. As to the appeal, I was told that I could present a petition for pardon from the Bagne, which would have the same effect. We remained however some months at Douai, which made me regret bitterly that I had not made my petition for annulling the sentence.

At length the order of removal arrived, and, what would scarcely be credited from men doomed to the galleys, it was hailed with enthusiasm, so much were we tired of the torments of Marin, the jailor. Our new situation was not however much more satisfactory; the officer, Hurtrel, who accompanied us, I know not why, had ordered irons of a new construction, which fastened to each of our legs a ball of fifteen pounds weight, whilst we were secured two and two by a massive wrist-cuff of iron. Besides, the vigilance was extreme, and it was impossible to think of doing anything by address. An attack by main force could alone save us, and I proposed it to fourteen of my companions, who agreed on it, and it was settled that the project should be put in excution on our way through the forest of Compeigne. Desfosseux was

of the party, and by means of fine saws which he had always securely secreted about him, out fetters were cut in three days; the plaister of a particular sort of gum prevented our keepers from perceiving the trace of the instruments.

On reaching the forest and gaining the appointed spot, the signal was given, the fetters fell from us, and we leaped from the carriages which enclosed us to try and gain the thicket; but the five gendarmes and the eight dragoons who escorted us, charged sword in hand. We entrenched ourselves behind the trees, armed with the stones which are piled up to mend the roads, and with some weapons we had got hold of at the first moment of confusion. The soldiers hesitated for an instant, but, well armed and well mounted, they soon made up their minds, and at the first charge two of our party fell dead, five more terribly wounded, and the others falling on their knees cried for mercy. Surrender was now imperative; and Desfosseux, myself, and some others who had escaped, got into the carriage, when Hurtrel, who had kept at a very respectful distance from the affray, came up to a poor wretch, who certainly did not hurry himself very much, and thrust his sabre through him. Such baseness enraged us; the prisoners who had not yet ascended the carriages took up stones, and but for the aid of the dragoons, Hurtrel would have been knocked on the head. The soldiers bid us desist before we brought down destruction on ourselves; and the thing was so evident, that we were compelled to lay down our arms, that is the stones. This circumstance, however, put a termination to the annoyances of Hurtrel, who never approached us but with fear and trembling.

At Senlis we were placed in the temporary prison, one of the most horrible I ever tenanted. The jailor exercising the office of street-keeper, the prison was guarded by his wife; and what a creature was she! As we had made ourselves notorious, she thrust us

into the most secret dungeons, convincing herself by previous personal examination that we had nothing about us that could aid escape. We were however trying the walls, when we heard her roar out, "Rascals, I am coming to you with my bastinado; I will teach you how to play music." We took her at her word, and all desisted. The next day we reached Paris, and were lodged in the outer boulevards, and at four in the afternoon we got in sight of Bicêtre.

On reaching the end of the avenue which looks on the road to Fontainebleau, the carriages turned to the right, and entered an iron gate, above which I read mechanically this inscription—"Hospice de la viellesse" (Hospital for the aged.) In the fore court many old men were walking, clothed in grey garments. They were paupers; and stared at us with that stupid curiosity which results from a monotonous and purely animal existence; for it often happens that a person admitted into a hospital, having no longer his own subsistence to provide for, renounces the exercise of his narrow faculties, and ends by falling into a state of perfect idiotcy. On reaching the second court, in which was the chapel, I remarked that the majority of my companions hid their faces with their hands or pocket-handkerchiefs. It may be supposed that they experienced some feeling of shame. No; they were only thinking of allowing their faces to be seen as little as possible, so that if opportunity presented they might the more easily escape.

"Here we are," said Desfosseux to me: "you see that square building—that is the prison." We alighted at an iron door, guarded inside by a sentry. Having entered the office, we were only registered, our description being deferred until the next day. I perceived, however, that the jailor looked at us, Desfosseux and me, with a sort of curiosity, and I thence concluded that we had been recommended by the officer Hurtrel, who had preceded us a quarter of an hour from the time of the business of the forest of

Compiègne. Having opened many low doors, guarded with iron plates, and the Bird-cage Wicket, we were introduced to a large square yard, where about sixty prisoners were playing at fives, and shouting so loudly as to sound all over the place. At our appearance their game ceased, and surrounding us, they examined with much surprise the irons which loaded us. It was, besides, to enter Bicêtre in the most favourable manner, to be decked with such caparisons, for they estimated the deserts of the prisoner, that is to say, his boldness and talent for escape, by the precautions taken to secure him. Desfosseux, who found himself amongst friends, had no difficulty in introducing us as the most distinguished personages of the north; he did more, he particularly expatiated on my merits, and I was accordingly surrounded and made much of by all the worthies of the prison: Beaumont, Guillaume, Mauger, Jossat, Maltaisé, Corun, Blondy, Troaflat, and Richard, one of the party concerned in the murder of a Lyons courier, never left me. As soon as my fetters were taken off, they took me to the drinking-shop, where for two hours I did justice to a thousand invitations, when a tall man, with a police-officer's cap, who they told me was the room-inspector, took us to a large place called Le Fort Mahon, when we were clothed in the prison garb, consisting of a frock half grey and half black. The inspector told me, I should be brigadier, that is, that I should preside at the giving out of the provisions amongst my table-companions, and I had, in consequence, a good bed, whilst others slept on camp couches. In four days I was known to all the prisoners; but although they had the highest opinion of my courage, Beaumont wishing to try me, picked a quarrel with me; we fought, and as he was an expert boxer, I was completely conquered. I, however, had my revenge in a room, where Beaumont, unable to display the resources of his art, had the worst of it. My first defeat, however, gave me a desire to be

instructed in the mysteries of this art, and the celebrated Jean Goupel, the Saint George of boxing, who was at the Bicêtre with us, soon counted me amongst those of his pupils who were destined to do him the most honour.

The prison of Bicêtre is a neat quadrangular building, inclosing many other structures and many courts, which have each a different name; there is the grande cour (great court) where the prisoners walk; the cour de cuisine (or kitchen court); the cour des chiens (or dog's court); the cour de correction (or court of punishment); and the cour des fers (or iron court). In this last is a new building five stories high; each story contains forty cells, capable of holding four prisoners. On the platform, which supplies the place of a roof, was night and day a dog named Dragon, who passed in the prison for the most watchful and incorruptible of his kind; but some prisoners managed at a subsequent period to corrupt him through the medium of a roasted leg of mutton, which he had the culpable weakness to accept; so true is it, that there are no seductions more potent than those of gluttony, since they operate indifferently on all organised beings. To ambition, to gaming, and to gallantry, there are bounds fixed by nature; but gluttony knows nothing of age, and if the appetite sometimes opposes its inert power, we are quits with it by a good fit of indigestion. However, the Amphytrions escaped whilst Dragon was swallowing the mutton; he was beaten and taken into the cour des chiens, where, chained up and deprived of the free air which he breathed on the platform, he was inconsolable for his fault, and perished piecemeal, a victim of remorse at his weakness in yielding to a moment of gluttony and error.

Near the erection I speak of is the old building, nearly arranged in the same way, and under which were dungeons of safety, in which were inclosed the troublesome and condemned prisoners. It was in one

of these dungeons that for forty-three years lived the accomplice of Cartouche, who betrayed him to procure this commutation! To obtain a moment's sunshine, he frequently counterfeited death so well, that when he had actually breathed his last sigh, two days passed before they took off his iron collar. A third part of the building, called La Force, comprised various rooms, in which the prisoners were placed who arrived from the provinces, and are destined, like ourselves, to the chain.

At this period, the prison of Bicêtre, which is only strong from the strict guard kept up there, could contain twelve hundred prisoners; but they were piled on each other, and the conduct of the jailors in no way assuaged the inconvenience of the place: a sullen air, a rough tone, and brutal manners, were exercised towards the prisoners, and they were in no way to be softened, but through the medium of a bottle of wine, or a pecuniary bribe. Besides, they never attempted to repress any excess or any crime, and provided that no one sought to escape, they might do whatever they pleased in the prison, without being restrained or prevented. Whilst men condemned for those attempts which modesty shrinks from naming, openly practised their detestable libertinism, and robbers exercised their industry inside the prison without any person attempting to check the crime or prevent the bestiality.

If any man arrived from the country well clad, who, condemned for a first offence, was not as yet initiated into the customs and usages of prisons, in a twinkling he was stripped of his clothes, which were sold in his presence to the highest bidder. If he had jewels or money, they were alike confiscated to the profit of the society, and if he were too long in taking out his earrings, they snatched them out without the sufferer daring to complain. He was previously warned, that if he spoke of it, they would hang him in the night to the bars of his cell, and afterwards say that he had

committed suicide. If a prisoner, out of precaution, when going to sleep, placed his clothes under his head, they waited until he was in his first sleep, and then they tied to his foot a stone, which they balanced at the side of his bed; at the least motion the stone fell, and aroused by the noise, the sleeper jumped up, and before he could discover what had occurred, his packet hoisted by a cord, went through the iron bars to the floor above. I have seen, in the depth of winter, these poor devils, having been deprived of their property in this way, remain in the court in their shirts until some one threw them some rags to cover their nakedness. As long as they remained at Bicêtre, by burying themselves, as we may say, in their straw, they could defy the rigour of the weather; but at the departure of the chain, when they had no other covering than the frock and trousers made of packing cloth, they often sunk exhausted and frozen before they reached the first resting place.

It is necessary, by facts of this nature, to explain the rapid depravity of men whom it was easy to excite to honest feelings; but who unable to escape the height of misery but by excess of wickedness, sought an alleviation of their lot in the real or apparent exaggeration of all species of crime. In society, we dread infamy; in the society of prisoners, there is no shame but in not being sufficiently infamous. The condemned prisoners are a distinct people; whoever is cast amongst them must expect to be treated as an enemy as long as he will not speak their language and will not identify himself with their way of thinking.

The abuses I have mentioned are not the only ones; there are others even more terrible. If a prisoner were marked out as a false brother or as a sneak, he was pitilessly knocked on the head, without any jailor interfering to prevent it. Matters came to such a pitch, that it was necessary to assign a particular division to those individuals, who, giving an account of their own doings had made any mention of their com-

rades which they thought could in any way compromise them. On the other hand the impudence of the robbers, and the immorality of their keepers, were carried to such an extent, that they prepared openly in the prison tricks of swindling and theft, which were to be perpetrated on quitting the walls of the prison. I will mention only one of these plans, which will suffice to evince the measure of credulity of the dupes and the audacity of the plotters. These latter obtained the address of certain rich persons living in the province, which was easy from the number of prisoners who were constantly arriving. They then wrote letters to them, called, in the slang language, 'letters of Jerusalem,' and which contained in substance what follows. It is useless to observe that the names of places and persons change according to circumstances.

"Sir,—You will doubtlessly be astonished at receiving a letter from a person unknown to you, who is about to ask a favour from you; but from the sad condition in which I am placed, I am lost if some honourable person will not lend me succour: that is the reason of my addressing you, of whom I have heard so much that I cannot for a moment hesitate to confide all my affairs to your kindness. As valet-de-chambre to the marquis de ——— I emigrated with my master, and that we might avoid suspicion we travelled on foot and I carried the luggage, consisting of a casket containing 16,000 francs in gold and the diamonds of the late marchioness. We were on the point of joining the army at ———, when we were marked out and pursued by a detachment of volunteers. The marquis, seeing how closely we were pressed, desired me to throw the casket into a deep ditch near us, so that it might not implicate us in case we were apprehended. I relied on recovering it the following night; but the country people, aroused by the tocsin which the commandant of the detachment ordered to be rung, began to beat the wood in which we were concealed, with

so much vigour, that it was necessary to think only of escape. On reaching a foreign province, the marquis received some advances from the prince of ———; but these resources soon failing, he resolved on sending me back for the casket thrown into the ditch. I was the more certain of finding it, as on the day after I had thrown it from me, we had made a written memorandum of the localities, in case we should be for any length of time without being able to return for it. I set out, and entering France, reached the village of ——— without accident, near the spot where we had been pursued. You must know the village perfectly, as it is not three quarters of a league from your residence. I prepared to fulfil my mission, when the landlord of the auberge where I had lodged, a bitter jacobin and collector of national property, remarking my embarrassment when he proposed to drink to the health of the republic, had me apprehended as a suspected person: and as I had no passport, and unfortunately resembled an individual pursued for stopping the diligences, I was taken from prison to prison to be confronted with my pretended accomplices, until on reaching Bicêtre I was obliged to go to the infirmary, where I have been for two months.

"In this cruel situation, having heard mention of you by a relation of my master's, who had property in your district, I beg to know if I cannot, through your aid, obtain the casket in question and get a portion of the money which it contains. I could then supply my immediate necessities and pay my counsel, who dictates this, and assures me that by some presents, I could extricate myself from this affair.

"Receive, sir, &c.

(Signed) "N———."

Out of one hundred such letters, twenty were always answered: and astonishment will cease when we consider that they were only addressed to men known by their attachment to the old order of things, and that no-

thing reasons less than the spirit of party. It testified besides, to the person addressed, that unlimited confidence which never fails to produce its effect on self-love or interest; the person answered that he would agree to undertake to get the casket from its place of concealment. Another letter from the pretended valet-de-chambre stating, that being entirely stripped, he had agreed with the keeper of the infirmary for a very small sum to sell the trunk, in which was, in the false bottom, the plan already alluded to. Then the money arrived, and they received sums sometimes amounting to twelve or fifteen hundred francs. Some individuals, thinking to give a profound proof of sagacity, came even from the remotest parts of their province to Bicêtre, where they received the destined plan which was to conduct them to this mysterious forest, which, like the fantastic forests of the romances of chivalry, fled eternally before them. The Parisians themselves sometimes fell into the snare: and some persons may still remember the adventure of the clothseller of the Rue des Prouvaires, who was caught undermining an arch of the Pont Neuf, where he expected to find the diamonds of the duchess de Bouillon.

We may imagine that such manœuvres could not be effected but by the consent and with the participation of the keepers, since they received the correspondence of the treasure-seekers. But the jailor thought, that independently of the direct benefit he thence drew from it, by the increase of the money spent by the prisoners in viands and spirits, they being thus occupied would not think of escaping. On the same principle he tolerated the making varieties of things in straw, wood, and bone, and even false pieces of two sous, with which Paris was at one time inundated. There were also other crafts exercised; but these were done clandestinely: they made privately false passports with the pen, so well done as to pass currently, saws for cutting iron, and false hair, which

were of great service in escaping from the Bagne—the galley-slaves being particularly recognizable by their shorn heads. These various articles were concealed in tin-cases, which could be hid in the intestines.

As for me, always occupied with the idea of escaping from the Bagne and reaching a sea-port whence I could embark, I was night and day plotting the means of getting away from Bicêtre. I at length imagined that by breaking through the quadrangle of Fort-Mahon and reaching the water-courses made under it, we might, by means of a short mine get into the court of the ideots I have before alluded to, whence there would be no difficulty in reaching the outside. This project was executed in ten days and as many nights. During the whole time the prisoners, of whom we had any distrust, were always accompanied by a trusty man; but we were obliged to wait until the moon should be on the wane. At length, on the 3rd of October 1797, at two o'clock in the morning, we descended the water-course, thirty-three in number, provided with dark lantherns, and we soon opened the subterranean passage and reached the court of the ideots. We wanted a ladder, or something instead of it, to climb the walls: and at last got hold of a long pole, and we were going to draw lots to decide who should first climb up, when a noise of chains suddenly broke the silence of night.

A dog came out from a kennel placed in an angle of the court; we stood motionless and held our breath, for it was an important moment. After having stretched himself out and yawned, as if he had only wanted to change place, the animal put one foot into his kennel as if about to return, and we then thought ourselves saved. Suddenly he turned his head to the place in which we were huddled together, and fixed on us two eyes which looked like burning coals. A low growling was then followed with barkings which sounded all over the place. Desfosseux wished to try and cut his throat, but he was of a size to render the issue of a contest doubtful. It appeared best to

us to lie down in a large open space, which served as a walking ground for the ideots; but the dog still kept up the concert, and his colleagues having joined him the din became so excessive that the inspector Giroux, fancying something particular was passing amongst his lodgers, and knowing his customers, began his round by Fort-Mahon, and almost fell backwards at finding no one. At his cries the jailor, turnkeys, and guard, all assembled. They soon discovered the road we had taken, and taking the same to get into the court of the ideots, they loosened the dog, who ran straight at us. The guards then entered the place where we were with fixed bayonets, as if about to carry a redoubt. They put handcuffs on us, the usual prelude of any important matter to be done in a prison; and we then returned, not to Fort-Mahon, but to the dungeon without however experiencing any bad treatment.

This attempt, the boldest of which the prison had for a long time been the theatre, threw the keepers into so much confusion that it was two days before they perceived that one of the prisoners of Fort-Mahon was missing: it was Desfosseux. Knowing all his address I thought him at a distance, when, on the morning of the third day, I saw him enter my dungeon pale, exhausted, and bleeding. When the door was closed on him he told me all his adventure.

At the moment when the guard had seized us, he had squatted down in a sort of tub, probably used for baths, and hearing no noise, he had left his retreat: and the pole had aided him in climbing several walls: but yet he always got back to the ideot's court. Day was just breaking, and he heard footsteps going and coming in the buildings, for they are nowhere earlier than in hospitals. It was necessary to avoid the gaze of the turnkey, who would soon be in the courts: the wicket of a room was half open—he glided in, and was about with much precaution to roll himself in a large heap of straw; but what was his astonishment to see

it occupied by a man naked, his hair dishevelled, beard long, and eye haggard and bloodshot. The madman, for such he was, looked at Desfosseux with a fierce air, then made him a quick sign: and as he stood still, darted at him as if to attack him. A few caresses seemed to appease him: he took Desfosseux by the hand and made him sit down beside him, heaping all the straw round him in the manner and with the gestures of a monkey. At eight o'clock a morsel of black bread fell in at the door, which he took up, looked at, threw into a heap of dirt, and then picked it up and began to eat. During the day more bread was brought; but as the madman was asleep Desfosseux seized and devoured it, at the risk of being himself devoured by his terrible companion, who might have been enraged at the abstraction of his pittance. At twilight the madman awoke, and talked for some time with inconceivable volubility; night came on and his excitement sensibly increased, and he began to leap about and make hideous contortions, shaking his chains with a kind of pleasure.

In this appalling situation Desfosseux waited with impatience until the madman fell asleep to go out at the wicket. About midnigbt, hearing him move no longer, he advanced first one leg and then the other, when he was seized by the madman with a powerful grasp, who threw him on the straw and placed himself before the wicket, where he remained till daylight motionless as a statue. The next night another attempt, and another obstacle. Desfosseux, who grew distracted, employed his strength, and a tremendous struggle ensued: Desfosseux, being struck by his chains, and covered with bites and blows, was compelled to call for the keepers. They mistaking him at first for one of the madmen who had got loose, were also about to put him in a cell; but he managed to make himself known, and at length obtained the favour of being brought back to us.

We remained eight days in the dungeon, after which

I was put in the Chaussée, where I found a party of prisoners who had received me so well on my arrival. They were making good cheer and denied themselves nothing: for, independently of the money procured by the 'letters of Jerusalem,' they had got a supply from some females whom they knew, and who constantly visited them. Having become, as at Douai, the object of special vigilance, I still sought to escape: when at length the day arrived for the departure of the chain.

CHAPTER VIII.

The departure of the chain—Captain Vies and his lieutenant Thierry—The complaint of the galley-slaves—The visit from Paris—Humanity of the galley-serjeants—They encourage plundering—The loaf converted into a portmanteau—Useless attempt to escape—The Bagne at Brest—The benedictions.

It was the 20th of November 1797: all the morning we remarked a more than usual commotion in the prison. The prisoners had not left their cells, and the gates were every moment opened and shut with much noise: the jailors went to and fro with a busy air, and they were knocking off irons, in the great court, of which the sound reached our ears. About eleven o'clock two men clothed in blue uniforms entered Fort-Mahon, where for eight days I had been replaced with the companions of my essay to escape: it was the captain of the chain and his lieutenant. "Well," said the captain, smiling in a kind of familiar way, "have we any return horses (fugitive galley-slaves)?" And whilst he spoke all pressed about, trying who should testify most respect to him. "Good day, M. Viez; good day, M. Thierry," resounded from all sides. These salutations were even repeated by the

prisoners who had never seen either Viez or Thierry, but who assuming an air of acquaintance, hoped to get some favour. It was no wonder if Viez was a little giddy with so much applause; but as he was accustomed to these homages, it did not quite turn his brain, and he knew very well what he was about. He perceived Desfosseux. "Ah! ah!" said he, "here is a darby cutter (one skilled in cutting off his chains), who has travelled before with us. I heard that you had a narrow escape of being a head shorter (guillotined) at Douai, my boy. You escaped well by Jove; for, look you, it is better to go back to the meadow (Bagne) than let the executioner play at pitch and toss with your knowledge-box (head). Besides, my lads, let the world be quiet, and we shall get beef and celery." The captain had only begun his inspection and continued it, addressing similar jokes to all his "merchandize," for by that name he called the condemned prisoners.

The critical moment arrived, and we went into the Cours des Fers, where the house-surgeon came to us to examine if we were all in a state to bear the fatigues of the journey. We were all pronounced adequate, although some were in a most woful plight. Each prisoner then puts off the prison livery and assumes his own clothes; those who have none have a frock and trousers of packing-cloth, insufficient to protect them from the cold and damp. Hats and clothes, if at all decent belonging to the prisoners, are torn in a particular way to prevent escape; they take for instance the border off the hat and the collar from the coat. No prisoner is allowed to retain more than six francs; the overplus is given to the captain, who gives it on the route in proportion as it is needed. This precaution is easily eluded by placing louis in large sous hollowed out.

These preliminaries adjusted, we went into the great court where were the guards of the chain, better known as argousins, or galley serjeants, who were for

the most part men of Auvergne, water-carriers, messengers, or coalmen, who carried on their trade in the intervals between the journeys. In the midst of them was a large wooden chest containing the fetters which are used in all similar expeditions. We were made to approach two and two, taking care to match us in height, by means of a chain of six feet in length, united to the cordon of twenty-six prisoners, who could thus only move in a body; each was confined to the chain by a sort of iron triangle, called the cravat, which, opening on one side by a turning screw, is closed on the other with a nail firmly rivetted. This is the most perilous part of the operation; the most turbulent and riotous then keep quiet; for, at the least movement, instead of falling on the anvil, the blows would break their skull, which every stroke of the hammer grazes. Then a prisoner comes with long scissars and cuts off the hair and whiskers of the prisoners, pretending to leave them irregular.

At five in the evening, the fettering was finished; the argousins retired, and the prisoners alone remained. Left to themselves, far from despairing, these men gave themselves up to all the tumults of riotous gaiety. Some vociferated horrible jokes, echoed from all sides with the most disgusting shouts; others amused themselves by provoking the stupid laughter of their companions by beastly gestures. Neither the ears, nor the modesty were even spared, all that was heard or seen was immoral and discordant. It is too true that once loaded with fetters, the condemned thinks himself obliged to trample under foot all that is honoured and respected by the society which has cast him off; there are for him no longer any restraints, but from material obstacles; his charter is the length of his chain, and he knows no law but the stick to which his jailor accustoms him. Thrown amidst beings, to whom nothing is sacred, he takes care how he testifies that steady resignation which betokens repentance; for then he would be the butt of a thousand jokes, and his keepers,

troubled at his serious mood, would accuse him of meditating some plot. It is best, if he would keep them unsuspicious of his intentions, that he should always appear reckless and abandoned. A prisoner who sports with his destiny is never an object of mistrust; the experience of the greater part of the wretched beings who have escaped from the Bagnes prove this. What is certain is, that with us, those who had the greatest interest in escaping were the least dejected; they were the leaders. When night came on, they began to sing. Imagine fifty scoundrels, the greater part drunk, all screeching different airs. In the midst of this din a "return horse" thundered out with the lungs of a Stentor, some couplets of "The Galley Slave's Complaint."

"The chain, the chain,
Makes us complain;
But never mind,
We may leave it behind.

"Our coats are of a scarlet hue,
We wear no hats on our head
But caps, and they've taken our cravats too,
And left us queer ties instead.
'Tis true we are spoil'd children,
And have no right to complain;
And for fear of losing us, now and then,
They fasten us with a chain.

"Oh, we will make articles fine and nice,
In wood, in straw, in wax,
And sell them below the market price,
For our shops will pay no tax.
And those who come to see our toys
Will purchase every day,
And the produce of our hands, my boys,
Will moisten well our clay.

* * * * * *

"Then comes the time to fill the paunch,
Bring in the beans so white!
They're not so good as a fine plump haunch,
But we lack not appetite.
How much more wretched had been our lot,
If, like many a jolly cadet,
Instead of the galleys, we'd chanc'd to 've got,
To the abbey of Mont-a-r'gret."

All our companions were not so happy; in the third cordon, composed of the least disorderly, we heard sobs, saw tears flowing; but these symptoms of grief, or of repentance, were hailed by the shouts and threats of the two other cordons, where I figured in the first rank as a dangerous fellow, from my address and influence. I had near me two men, one a schoolmaster condemned for rape; and the other, an ex-officer of health, sentenced for forging, who, without mirth or melancholy talked together with a very calm and natural tone.

"We are going to Brest," said the schoolmaster.

"Yes," answered the officer of health, "we are going to Brest; I know the country, I passed through it when I was sub aide-de-camp in the 16th brigade—a good country, upon my word—I shall not be sorry to see it again.

"Is there much amusement?" asked the pedagogue.

"Amusement!" said his companion, with an air of astonishment.

"Yes, amusement—I ask you, if we can procure any little pleasure if we are well treated,—if provisions are cheap."

"In the first place, you will be taken care of," replied the officer, "and well taken care of, for at the Bagne at Brest, only two hours are needed to find all the beans in the soup, while at Toulon the search would take eight days."

Here the conversation was interrupted by loud cries, proceeding from the second division. They were

knocking on the head three prisoners, the ex-commissary of war, Lemière, the staff-major, Simon, and a robber named the Petit Matelot (little sailor), who were accused of having betrayed their comrades by information, or of having defeated some plot in prison. The person who had pointed them out to the vengeance of the galley-slaves, was a young man, who would have been a good study for a painter, or an actor. With dilapidated green slippers, a hunting waistcoat, destitute of buttons, and nankeen pantaloons, which seemed to defy the inclemency of the weather; his head dress was a helmet without a peak, through the holes of which a tattered night-cap was visible. In the Bicêtre, he was only known by the name of 'mademoiselle,' and I learnt that he was one of those degraded wretches, who abandoned, in Paris, to a course of the most infamous prostitution, find at the Bagne a theatre worthy of the most disgusting debaucheries. The argousins, who ran at the first noise, did not give themselves the least trouble to get the Petit Matelot from the hands of the galley slaves, and he died four days afterwards of the blows he had received. Lemière and Simon would also have perished but for my interference; I had known the former when in the roving army, where he had rendered me some service. I declared that it was he who had supplied me with the tools necessary for undermining the walls at Fort-Mahon, and thenceforward they left him and his companion unmolested.

We passed the night on the stones in a church, then converted into a magazine. The argousins made regular rounds, to assure themselves that no one was engaged in fiddling (sawing their fetters). At daybreak we were all on foot; the lists were read over, and the fetters examined. At six o'clock we were placed in long cars, back to back, the legs hanging down outside, covered with hoar frost and motionless from cold. On reaching St Cyr, we were entirely stripped, to undergo a scrutiny which extended to our stockings, shoes,

shirt, mouth, ears, nostrils, &c. &c. It was not only the files in cases which they sought, but also for watch springs, which enable a prisoner to cut his fetters in less than three hours. This examination lasted for upwards of an hour, and it is really a miracle that one half of us had not our noses or feet frozen off with cold. At bed-time, we were heaped together in a cattle stall, where we laid so close that the body of one served for the pillow of the person who laid nearest to him, and if any individual got entangled in his own, or any other man's chain, a heavy cudgel rained down a torrent of blows on the hapless offender. As soon as we had laid down on a few handfulls of straw, which had already been used for the litter of the stable, a whistle blew to command us to the most absolute silence, which was not allowed to be disturbed by the least complaint, even when, to relieve the guard placed at the extremity of the stable, the argousins actually walked over our bodies.

The supper consisted of a pretended bean soup, and a few morsels of half mouldy bread. The distribution was made from large wooden troughs, containing thirty rations; and the cook, armed with a large pot ladle, did not fail to repeat to each prisoner, as he served him, "One, two, three, four, hold out your porringer, you thief;" the wine was put into the same trough from which the soup and meat were served out, and then an argousin, taking a whistle, hanging to his button-hole, blew it thrice; saying, "Attention, robbers, and only answer by a yes or a no. Have you had bread?"—"Yes." "Soup?"—"Yes." "Meat?"—"Yes." Wine?"—"Yes." "Then go to sleep, or pretend to do so."

A table was laid out at the door, at which the captain, lieutenant, and chief argousins, seated themselves to take a repast superior to ours; for these men, who profitted by all occasions to extort money from the prisoners, took excellent care of themselves, and eat and drank abundantly. At this moment the stable

offered one of the most hideous spectacles that can be imagined; on one side were a hundred and twenty men herded together like foul beasts, rolling about their haggard eyes, whence fatigue or misery banished sleep; on the other side, eight ill-looking fellows were eating greedily without, not for one moment, losing sight of their carbines or their clubs. A few miserables candles affixed to the blackened walls of the stable, cast a murky glare over this scene of horror, the silence of which was only broken by stifled groans, or the clank of fetters. Not content with striking us indiscriminately, the argousins made their detestable and brutal witticisms about the prisoners; and if a man, fevered with thirst, asked for water, they said to him, "Let him who wants water put out his hand." The wretch obeyed, mistrusting nothing, and was instantly overwhelmed with blows. Those who had any money were necessarily careful; they were but very few, the long residence of the majority in prison having for the most part exhausted their feeble resources.

These were not the only abuses which mark the progress of the galley chain. To economize to his own profit the expenses of the journey, the captain generally made one of the cordons to go on foot. But this cordon was always that of the strongest men, that is, the most turbulent of the condemned. Wo to the females whom they met, or the shops which they came near. The women were assaulted in the grossest manner, and the shops stripped in a twinkling, as I saw, at Morlaix, at a grocer's, who did not save even a loaf of sugar, or a pound of soap. It may be asked, what the guards were about during the commission of this offence? The guards were pretending to be very busily preventing it, but without opposing any real obstacle to it, knowing that they would ultimately profit by the plunder, since the prisoners must sell their booty through their medium, or exchange with them for strong liquors. It was the same with the thefts made on the prisoners who were added to the

chain in its passage; scarcely were they ironed, when their neighbours hustled them, and took from them all the little sums they might have.

Far from preventing or checking these spoliations, the argousins even suggested them, as I saw them do with an ex-gendarme who had sewed up a few louis in his leather breeches. "Here is some fat!" said they, and in less than three minutes, the poor devil was pennyless. At such times the party attacked call out loudly for the argousins, who take good care not to approach until the robbery be perfected, and they thump, with heavy cudgels, the poor wretch who has been plundered. At Rennes, the bandits I am speaking of carried their infamy to such an extent, as to despoil a sister of charity, who had brought us some tobacco and money, in a stall where we were to pass the night. The most crying of these abuses have disappeared, but many yet exist, which it will be difficult to root out, if we consider to what sort of men the conducting of the chain must be entrusted, and the materials they have to work upon.

Our toilsome journey endured for twenty-four days, and on reaching Pont-a-Lezen, we were placed in the depôt of the Bagne, when the prisoners perform a kind of quarantine, until they have recovered from their fatigue and it has been ascertained whether they have any contagious disease. On our arrival we were washed in pairs, in large tubs filled with warm water, and on quitting the bath our clothes were allotted to us. I received like the others, a red frock or cassock, two pair of trowsers, two sail cloth shirts, two pair of shoes, and a green cap; each garment and article was marked with the initials GAL, and the cap had besides a tin plate, on which was the number of the entry in the register. When they had given us our clothing, they rivetted an iron ring round the leg, but did not couple us.

The depôt of Pont-a-Lezen, being a sort of lazaretto, there was not a very rigorous vigilance kept up. I

was even told that it was easy to get out of the rooms and climb the outside walls. I learnt this from a man named Blondy, who had once escaped this way from the Bagne at Brest, and hoping to profit by this information, I made arrangements to avail myself of the first opportunity. We sometimes had loaves given to us, weighing eighteen pounds each, and on quitting Morlaix, I had hollowed out one of these and filled it with a shirt, a pair of trowsers, and some handkerchiefs. It was a new kind of portmanteau, and passed unsuspected. Lieutenant Thierry had not given me to a special watch, on the contrary, having learnt the grounds of my condemnation, he had told the commissary, when speaking of me, that with men as orderly as I was, he could manage the chain as easily as a girls' school. I had then inspired no mistrust, and looked about me to execute my project. I, at first, contemplated cutting through the wall of the room in which I was placed. A steel chisel left by accident on the foot of my bed by a turnkey prisoner, who rivetted the ancle cuffs, served me to make the opening, whilst Blondy cut my irons. This completed, my comrades made a figure of straw, which they put in my place, to deceive the vigilance of the argousins on guard, and soon, clothed in the garments I had concealed, I got into the court-yard of the depôt. The walls which environed it were at least fifteen feet high, and to climb them I found I must get something like a ladder, a pole served as a proxy, but it was so heavy and so long that it was impossible for me to drag it over the wall, to aid my descent on the other side. After many trials, as vain as they were painful, I was compelled to risk the leap, in which I succeeded so badly and came down with so much violence on my legs that I could scarcely drag myself into a bush that was near. I hoped, that when the pain had somewhat abated, I could escape before daybreak, but it became more excessive, and my feet swelled so prodigiously, that I was compelled to give up all hopes of escape. I

dragged myself along, as well as I was able, to the door of the depôt, to return to my cell, thinking thereby to diminish the number of blows which would be assuredly bestowed upon me. A sister whom I asked for, and to whom I told all, had me conveyed into a room where my feet were dressed. This excellent woman, who compassionated my lot, went to the commandant of the depôt, and obtained my pardon by her solicitations, and at the end of three weeks, being completely recovered, I was conveyed to Brest.

The Bagne is situated in the bosom of the bay; piles of guns, and two pieces of cannon, mounted at the gates, pointed out to me the entrance, into which I was introduced, after having been examined by the two guards of the establishment. The boldest of the condemned, however hardened, have confessed that it is impossible to express the emotions of horror excited by the first appearance of this abode of wretchedness. Each room containing twenty night camp couches, called bancs (benches), on which lie six hundred fettered convicts, in long rows, with red garbs, heads shorn, eyes haggard, dejected countenances, whilst the perpetual clank of fetters conspires to fill the soul with horror. But this impression on the convict soon passes away, who feeling that here he has no cause to blush at the presence of any one, soon identifies himself with his situation. That he may not be the butt of the gross jests and filthy buffoonery of his fellows, he affects to participate in them; he even exceeds them; and soon in tone and gesture this conventional depravity gets hold of his heart. Thus, at Anvers, an ex-bishop experienced, at first, all the outpourings of the riotous jokes of his companions; they always addressed him as monseigneur, and asked his blessing in all their obscenities; at every moment they constrained him to profane his former character by blasphemous words, and by dint of reiterating these impieties, he contrived to shake of their attacks; at a subsequent period he became the public-house keeper,

at the Bagne, and was always styled monseigneur, but he was no longer asked for absolution, for he would have answered with the grossest blasphemies.

It is on days of rest, particularly, that the recital of crimes often imaginary, of close connexions, and infamous compliances, complete the corruption of a man, whose punishment for a first fault exposes him to this pernicious contact. To prevent this, it has been in contemplation to do away with the system of Bagnes altogether. At first, opinion was unanimous on this point, but when a substitution of punishment became the matter in question, plans were very variously sketched out; some proposed penitentiaries, like those of Switzerland and the United States; others, and these are the majority, have advocated colonization, adducing the happy results, and prosperity of the English establishments in New South Wales, better known as Botany Bay.

Let us see if France is in a condition to enjoy these happy results and this prosperity.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the colonization of the convicts.

"See, say the partisans of colonization, see the flourishing report of New South Wales, it is only forty years since the English began to send convicts there, and already the country contains five cities; arts and luxury are cultivated, and printing is established. At Sydney Cove, the capital of the colony, there are philosophical and agricultural societies; a catholic and two methodist chapels. Although the greater part of the planters and under-magistrates are freed convicts, or those who have undergone

their sentence, yet all conduct themselves well and become excellent citizens. Women, the disgrace and refuse of their sex in the metropolis, women already mothers, but covering with opprobrium all that pertained to them, are now, with new connexions, models of sobriety and chastity. There is another argument to be adduced in support of this system, which has importance. The labour of the convicts in England, competing with that of a number of regular and free workmen, has a mischievous tendency in leaving the latter without work, and consequently increase the numbers thrown on the parish for support; thus, instead of being productive, their labour is injurious. In New South Wales, on the contrary, far from rivalling the English workman, the transport consumes his productions, since only English manufactures are admitted there. The importation amounts to three hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling, and the exportation of indigenous productions is calculated at a third of this sum; a decided argument in favour of colonization, and we may ask what prevents France from participating in so advantageous a system?"

This is doubtlessly very grand, but will it be permanent? Can we draw the inference that it will be equally applicable to France? To the first question, I will say that, in England, they are scarcely more unanimous on the subject than we are as to the advantages of colonizing convicts in general, and as to the results of the colonies of New South Wales, in particular. Independently of every other consideration, however, they afford to British commerce most valuable stations between India, China, the isles of Junda, and all the oriental Archipelago. Such advantages, which might perhaps have been obtained without having recourse to colonization, do not appear however to compensate for the enormous expenses which have at first occurred, and which continue still, to the detriment of the nation; the government having,

for some years, had to support a number, varying from eight to ten thousand convicts, whom they are unable to employ usefully. This fact perfectly accounts for the proposition submitted to the House of Commons, to send out to New South Wales, and its auxiliary establishments, Irish emigrants; the poor's rates would proportionally decrease, and the emigrant planters would employ the transports, who by clearing away and preparations, would have paved the way for establishing themselves.

In the meantime, until the determination of government, the unemployed convicts lead, according to their own statements, a very agreeable life, since on a recent enquiry it has been found that many individuals have purposely committed an offence punishable by transportation, that they might be sent out to the colony. Humanity will certainly approve such results, if mildness soothes the manners of the convicts, but we know that idleness only increases bad inclinations, and this is proved from the return to vicious courses of those who return to England on the expiration of their sentence. Their amendment is scarcely more perceptible at the colony, for it is well known that of the three chapels, built at Sidney Cove, they have burnt two, with the intention of frustrating the order which constrains them to attend divine service.

The women, who are represented as purified by the change of hemisphere, testify for the greater part a sort of libertinism, incited in some measure by the vast numerical disproportion of the two sexes, which is as fourteen males for one female. Marriage with a convict, pardoned or freed, procuring them immediate liberty, the first thing sought by the women on their arrival at the depôt of Paramatta, is to get married to a man in these circumstances. They thus often get hold of an old man; a wretch, whom they leave after a few days, and return to Sydney, where they can freely abandon themselves to any species of excess. The result is, that surrounded by corrupt examples,

the females who are born from this promiscuous connexion prostitute themselves at a very tender age.

From these facts, accidentally elicited by inquiries into the state of the country by parliamentary discussions, it results, that colonization is far from influencing, as has been unfoundedly believed, the morals of the convicts; and it is besides now decided that it would be almost impracticable for France. The first and most potent objection is, the entire want of a fitting place for transportation; for to form an establishment at Sainte-Marie de Madagascar, the only one of the French possessions at all suitable for such an object, would be sending to almost certain death, not only the convicts, but the governors and guards. The small number of those whom the climate would not have destroyed, would not fail to seize on the stationary vessels, turn pirates, as has been frequently the case at New South Wales; and, instead of a penitentiary establishment, we should find that we had only formed a new horde of buccaniers. Again, it is impossible to think of sending the convicts to any of our colonies, not even to Guyana, where the vast savannahs would not be sufficient to secure an indispensable isolation; and escapes would be soon multiplied, and the colonists would call to mind the lesson given, it is said, by Franklin to the English government, who at that period were sending the convicts to the United States. It is asserted that immediately on the arrival of a transport at Boston, he sent to the minister, Walpole, four boxes of rattlesnakes, begging him to set them free in Windsor park, "so that," he said, "the species might be propagated and become as advantageous to England as the convicts had been to North America."

Even at the present day, escapes at New South Wales are more general than may be thought; and this is proved by a passage from a narrative published in London by a liberated convict, who, without heeding how much he might compromise the reputation of

the establishment, was soon apprehended for committing fresh offences.

" When the termination of my exile had arrived, I had determined on quitting the colony; I embarked as servant to a gentleman and lady, formerly convicts, who had amassed sufficient to pay their expenses to England and settle there. It may be thought that my mind was quite satisfied and at ease, but this was not the case. I was never more disturbed nor more uneasy than at the moment when I embarked on board this vessel, and for this reason: I had clandestinely brought away with me six convicts, old companions of mine, and concealed them in the hold of the ship. They were men for whom I had a particular esteem; and it is the duty of a convict who leaves the land of exile never to leave a friend behind him if he can contrive the means of aiding his escape. What incessantly disturbed me was the necessity of providing for the wants of these men; and to do this I was obliged to turn thief again; so that from one moment to another I rendered myself and them liable to detection. Every evening I was obliged to visit the provisions of each person, and carry the produce of my thefts to them.

" There were a great many passengers on board, and I made each contribute in his turn, that it might be the less sensibly felt, and be the longer time of service to me. In spite of my precautions, I often heard them say one to the other, that their provisions went fast and they could not discover how. What most embarrassed me was the raw meat, which however my comrades were compelled to devour; and sometimes I could not get any, particularly when the moon shone brightly, and then I was compelled to steal a double allowance of bread. My master having desired me to cook for him and his wife, the opportunity was of course made profitable. If I made broth or a hash I took care to retain half, which took the road to the hold. All that I could get besides

went there too; for I frequented the cook's kitchen, on whom I also constantly levied contributions.

"There was on board a friend of mine, a cooper, who, having staid the time of his sentence, was returning like me to England. I had let him into my confidence, and he served me greatly in my thefts on the cook; for instance, he drew him on one side and occupied him whilst I was carrying off something of everything that came to hand. Besides the cooper, there was a sailor on board who was also in the secret, but who, as it will appear in the sequel, was a confidant too many.

"One Sunday, after we had been a month at sea, the cooper and the sailor were talking together in the forecastle, when a dispute arose about some trifle. I was at the moment trying to open a chest to get some provisions from it. when the sailor, who had left the cooper, came up to me. Deceived by the darkness of the night, for it was about nightfall, and taking me for some other person, he struck me on the shoulder, saying, 'Where is the captain?' I answered him, and on recognizing me, he ran into the captain's cabin crying with all his might, 'Murder! murder! we are all lost! The ship will be taken; there are ten men concealed in the hold, and so and so (meaning me and the cooper) are in the plot; they want to murder us and make off with the ship!'

"The captain, immediately calling his mate, went with him on deck, and ordered all hands to assemble there. When we had all met, the sailor again pointed out me and the cooper as the principals in the plot, asserting that there were ten men in the hold. They went down with lights, but returned without discovering anything, so well had my men concealed themselves. At length, the captain not liking to be defeated, determined on filling the hold with smoke, and the poor devils were compelled to come out for fear of being choked. On getting on deck they cut a most miserable figure, for since their departure from Sydney

Cove they had neither been shaved nor washed, and their clothes were in rags. What made the sight still more wretched was, that the night was dark, and the deck was illuminated by a solitary lanthorn.

"The captain began by putting fetters on the new comers; then, after having questioned them, and being assured that there were only six of them, he made them lie down without food on the deck. The second act of the piece consisted in treating the cooper and myself in a similar manner. When we were all together, they threw a large sail over us, like a net, and thus we passed the night. The next day, early, we went below, one after the other, with a rope round our waists, to the bottom of the hold, and were put in a hole so dark that we could not see each other. We were left there on the bare plank, and for food we had a pint of water and a pound of biscuit daily. We received this distribution without seeing it; for the sailor who brought it to us announced his arrival by a cry to us to extend our hands; and on receiving this pittance we divided it amongst us entirely in the dark.

"We were kept in this situation for forty mortal days, that is, until the ship reached the Cape of Good Hope, where she was to touch. The captain went to the governor to announce to him that he had some fugitive convicts on board, and to ask whether he could not disembark them, and have them confined in the prison of Cape Town; but the governor said he would have nothing to do with such people, and would not allow them to be landed. However, the captain soon consoled himself for this, on learning that there was an Irish ship in the harbour laden with convicts for Botany Bay. He made an arrangement with the captain of this ship, and induced him to take my poor comrades with him. They were taken from their dungeon for this purpose, and I never saw them again."

The obstacles which I have mentioned are so serious that I shall not touch on the consequences of a naval

war on the spot, intercepting all communication and all conveyances. In aid of the pursuits of science, we have seen belligerent powers afford a free passage to naturalists and mathematicians, but it may be doubted whether, for the sake of morals, the same favour would be shown to convicts, who might, after all, be only soldiers disguised.

Let us however for a moment admit that these obstacles are removed, and that transportation is possible, should it be perpetual for all convicts indifferently? Or should we go on the plan observed with the galley-slaves, by graduating the term of labour? In the first case, you would destroy all proportion between punishments and crimes; since the man who, according to this code would only have to serve a certain time at the galleys, would not see his country again any more than the man sentenced to transportation for life. In England, where the least period of sentence (seven years) is assigned as well to a robbery of twenty-four sous as for severe violence exercised against a magistrate, this disproportion exists; but it often palliates the severities of a legislation which punishes with death offences sentenced by us only to imprisonment. So, at the English assizes it is no uncommon thing to hear a prisoner, after sentence of transportation has been passed upon him, say, "Thank'ye, my lord."

If the transportation be not for life, we should fall into the delusion which the Counsels generally point out every year, by exclaiming against the mixing of the liberated convicts with the people. Our freed transports would return to society with nearly the same vices that they had contracted at the Bagne. All tends to confirm the idea that they would be more incorrigible than the transported Englishman, whom a national spirit for travelling and colonization frequently attaches to the soil where he has been transplanted.

Considering, then, colonization as nearly impossible,

it only remains to ameliorate, as much as possible, the morals of the convicts; to introduce to the Bagnes reforms pointed out by experience. The first would consist in classing the convicts according to their dispositions; and for that it would be necessary to consult not only their present behaviour, but also their previous conduct and acquaintance; a point not at all considered at the Bagnes, where the only thought is how to prevent escape. Men disposed to amend might obtain those little indulgences now bestowed on the most daring thieves—on convicts sentenced for life, whom they favour that they may not think of means of escape. It would, in fact, be proper to abridge the punishments, to effect the improvement of the prisoners; for the man whom a stay of six months at the Bagne would correct, would leave it at the end of five years entirely depraved.

Another precaution taken with those convicts who have many years to labour is, that of coupling them with those who have only a short sentence to undergo. They think thus to give them watchmen, who, unaccustomed to blows of the stick, and fearing to prolong their detention by being suspected as accomplices, would tell of the least attempt at escape. It follows, that the novice, yoked with the perfect villain, would be soon corrupted. On the days of rest, when the prisoners are not chained to the benches till evening, he necessarily follows his companion into the society of other bandits, who complete his degradation by testifying whatever the passions can produce that is most atrocious and appalling. I am understood. But is it not disgraceful, to see publicly organised a prostitution which, even in the midst of great cities, shrinks from the general eye into the shades of mystery? Why are not these disgusting excesses prevented, by shutting up in solitary confinement the young men who are usually the victims reserved to figure in these horrible Saturnalia.

It is also indispensably necessary to prevent the

abuses of ardent spirits, which excite the convicts to a state contrary to the calm so necessary for them to be kept in, if we would have reflection bring on repentance. We do not mean to say that they should be entirely separated, as is the case in the United States in some instances, but this can scarcely be put in force without inconvenience with men sentenced to hard labour; we must watch that the orders and regulations of the prison be properly carried into effect by the prisoners who receive them. At the same time that we should preserve the health of those unfortunates, we should prevent serious disorders. On the days of relaxation it often happens, that a convict, desirous of a debauch, pledges his allowance for a fortnight for the present advances of some comrades. He gets drunk and disorderly, and is accordingly beaten, and then reduced to water and bean soup, when he needs more nourishing provisions to support him. There are, besides, other modes of providing for these orgies, they rob the workshops, the magazines, and in the wood-yards. Some pilfer the copper-sheathing, of which they make six liard pieces, which they sell at a much lower price to the country people; others steal the tools with which the little toys are formed which are sold to visitors; others take logs of wood, which chopped into small pieces, go to the fires of the argousins, who are thus in a measure conciliated. I am told, that at the present day, this system has been reformed, and I am happy to hear it: all that I can say is, that when I was at Brest it was as "notorious as the sun at noon day," that no argousin ever bought fire-wood.

It is in the blacksmiths' workshops that the prisoners instruct each other in the art of forging false keys and other instruments for opening doors, such as ripping-chisels (cadets), pincers (monseigneurs), picklocks (rossignols), &c. &c. This objection is perhaps irremediable, in a port where ships are to be fitted out; but why should such workshops be allowed

in prisons in the interior of the country? I will add, that the labour of the convicts, of whatever kind, is far from being as productive as that of free mechanics; but it is an abuse which it is nearly hopeless to think of eradicating or reforming. The cudgel may certainly compel the convict to work, because there is a decided difference between activity and rest; but no chastisement can awaken in the breast of the convict that instinctive ardour which alone accelerates labour, and directs it to perfection. Besides, government must consider as very insignificant the produce of a convict's daily work, since it is never alluded to in the budget or receipts of the state. The total expense of the galley-slaves (chiourmes), classed under its different heads, amounts to the sum of 2,718,900 francs (113,281*l.*); these are some of the expenses—

Dress of the prisoners	220,500 francs
Ditto freed convicts	23,012
Expenses for shoes and stockings...	72,900
Ditto for making fetters	11,250
Ditto of capture	7,000
Ditto of conveyance of chain	130,000

Then came the salaries of the clerks and officers, pay, clothing, allowance of the guard, &c.

To render these expenses really useful, and to pursue measures of amelioration, so long and loudly called for, and which can only be attained gradually, we cannot too strongly recommend to the guardians, that moderation of conduct which should not be departed from even in inflicting the severest punishment. I have seen the galley-guards goad the wretched convicts to desperation, by ill-treating them, as their humours might dictate; and as if to sport with their misery, one of these brutes would say to a new comer, "What is your name? I will wager that your name is Dust.—Well, my name is Wind, and I make the Dust fly;" and then bastinado him in a most severe manner. Many galley-guards have been assassinated for thus provoking the convict, and rous-

ing him to revenge that nothing will make him lose sight of.

In the sequel of these Memoirs, I shall have occasion to return to this subject, when I touch on the system of surveillance, which is a new punishment for freed men.

The inconveniences and abuses that I have just adverted to existed at the prison of Brest when I was conducted thither, and were additional inducements to make my sojourn as brief as possible. In such a situation, the first thing is to assure oneself of the discretion of the comrade with whom we may be coupled. Mine was a vine-cutter from Dijon, about thirty years old, condemned to twenty-four years' labour for forcible burglary; already half an ideot, misery and brutal treatment had completely stupified him. Bowed beneath the stick, he seemed to have just preserved the instinct of a monkey or a dog, and thus answered the whistle of the galley-serjeants. He was of no use to me, and I was compelled to look out for a mate who would not fear or shrink from the perspective beatings which are always liberally bestowed on convicts suspected of favouring, or even conniving at the escape of a prisoner. To get rid of Bourguignon, I feigned indisposition, and he was yoked to another, and when I recovered, I was placed with a poor devil sentenced to eight years labour for stealing chickens from a church.

He had not entirely parted with his senses, and the first time we were alone together, said to me—"Listen, comrade; I can see you do not mean to live long at the public expense—be frank with me, and you will not lose by it." I told him that I intended to escape at the first opportunity. "Well," said he, "I advise you to bolt before the beasts of serjeants are quite acquainted with your phiz;—but have you any cash?" I told him that I had, and he then informed me that he could procure me other habiliments, but that I must buy a few utensils like one who meant to work out his

time quietly. These utensils were two wooden bowls, a wine keg, straps to support my fetters, and a small mattress stuffed with oakum. It was Thursday, the sixteenth day of my confinement at the Bagne, and on the Saturday evening I obtained sailor's clothes, which I immediately put on under my convict's frock. On paying the seller of them, I saw that he had about his wrists round cicatrices of deep burns, and I learnt, that being condemned to the gallies for life in 1776, he had been put to the torture at Rennes, without confessing the robbery of which he was accused. On the promulgation of the code of 1791, his sentence was commuted to twenty-four years' labour at the gallies.

The next day, my division went out, at the cannon's signal, to work at the pump, which was always in motion. At the wicket they examined, as usual, our manacles and clothing; knowing this practice, I had pasted over my sailor's garb a bladder painted flesh-colour. As I purposely left my frock and shirt open, none of the guards thought of examining me more closely, and I got out unsuspected. Arrived at this basin, I retired with my comrade behind a pile of planks, and my fetters having been cut the previous evening, soon yielded. Having got rid of these, I soon threw off my galley-frock and trowsers, and putting on under my leathern cap a wig which I had brought from Bicêtre, and having given my comrade the trifling recompense which I had promised him, I disappeared, cautiously gliding behind the piles of timber.

CHAPTER X.

The pursuit after the galley-slave—The village mayor—The voice of blood—The hospital—Sister Françoise—Faublas the second—The mother of robbers.

I PASSED through the wicket without difficulty, and found myself in Brest, a place entirely unknown to me; and the fear that my doubt as to what road I should take might induce suspicion, increased my uneasiness. At length, after a thousand ins and outs, turnings and twistings, I reached the only gate of the city, where was always stationed an old galley-guard, named Lachique, who detected a convict by a look, a motion, or turn; and what rendered his observations more easy is, that whoever passes any time at the Bagne, drags habitually and involuntarily that leg to which the fetter has been fastened. However, it was necessary to pass this dreaded personage, who was smoking very sedately, fixing his hawk's eye on all who went in and came out. I had been warned, and determining to exercise all my effrontery, on getting up to Lachique, I put down a pitcher of buttermilk, which I had purchased to render my disguise the more complete, and filling my pipe, I asked him for a light. He gave it readily, and with all the courtesy he was capable of, and after we had blown a few whiffs in each others' faces, I left him and went on my way.

I went straight forward for three quarters of an hour, when I heard the cannon shots which were fired to announce the escape of a convict, so that the peasantry of the neighbourhood may be informed that there is a reward of one hundred francs to be obtained by the lucky individual who may apprehend the fugitive. I saw many persons armed with guns and scythes scour about the country, and beat every bush, and even the smallest tufts of heath. Some labourers appeared to take their arms out with them as a precaution, for I

saw several quit their work with a gun which they took out of a furrow. One of these latter passed near me in a cross-road which I had taken on hearing the report of the cannon, but they had no suspicion of me, for I was clad very well, and my hat being off by reason of the heat, they saw my hair curled, which could not be the case with a convict.

I continued striking into all the bye-ways, and avoiding towns and detached houses. At twilight I met two women whom I asked about the road, but they answered me in a dialect which I did not comprehend, but on showing them some money, and making signs that I was hungry, they conducted me to a small village to a cabaret, kept by the garde-champêtre (patrole), whom I saw in the chimney nook, decorated with his insignia of office. I was for a moment disturbed, but soon recovering myself, I said I wished to speak to the mayor. "I am he," said an old countryman with a woollen cap and wooden shoes, seated at a small table and eating an oaten cake. This was a fresh disappointment to me, who relied on escaping in my way from the cabaret to the mayor's house. However, I had the difficulty to contend with, and surpass in some way or other. I told the wooden-shoed functionary, that having lost myself on leaving Morlaix for Brest, I had wandered about, and asking him at the same time how far it was from this latter city, and expressing a desire to sleep there that evening.—"You are five leagues from Brest," said he, "and it is impossible to reach it this evening; if you will sleep here, I will give you a bed in my barn, and tomorrow you can start with the garde-champêtre, who is going to carry back a fugitive convict whom we apprehended yesterday."

These last words renewed all my terrors, for by the tone in which they were uttered, I saw that the mayor had not credited the whole of my story. I, however, accepted his obliging offer; but after supper, at the instant we reached the barn, putting my hands

in my pockets, I cried out with all the energy of a man in despair—"Oh, heavens! I have left at Morlaix my pocket-book, with my passport and eight double louis. I must return this moment, yes, this very moment, but how shall I find my way? If the patrole, who knows the road, would go with me, we should be back in time in the morning to set out early with the galley-slave." This proposal routed all suspicions, for a man who wishes to escape seldom solicits the company he would fain avoid; on the other hand, the garde-champêtre, smelling a reward, had buttoned on his gaiters at the first word. We set out accordingly, and at break of day reached Morlaix. My companion, whom I had taken care to ply well with liquor on the road, was already pretty well in for it, and I completed him with some rum at the first pot-house we reached in the city. He staid there to wait for me at the table, or rather under the table, and he might have waited long enough.

I asked the first person I met to direct me on the road to Vannes, and on being told, I set out, as the Dutch proverb has it, "with my feet shod by fear." Two days passed without accident, but on the third, some leagues from Guemené, at a turning of the road, I met two gendarmes, who were returning from duty. The unexpected vision of yellow breeches and laced hats gave me uneasiness, and I made an effort to escape, when my two gentlemen desired me to halt, making at the same time a very significant gesture with their carbines. They came up to me, and having no credentials to show them, I invented a reply on the spur of the moment. "My name is Duval, born at l'Orient, deserter from the Cocarde frigate, now in the roadstead at St Malo." It is useless to say, that I had learnt all this during my stay at the Bagne, where we had daily accounts from all parts. "What!" cried the chief, "you must be Auguste—son of father Duval, who lives at l'Orient, on the terrace near the Boule d'or." I did not deny this, for it would have

been worse to have been detected as a fugitive convict. "Parbleu!" added the brigadier, "I am sorry you are caught, but that cannot now be helped; I must send you to l'Orient or to St Malo." I begged him not to send me to the former of these towns, not caring to be confronted with my new relation, in case they should desire to confirm the identity of my person. However, the quarter-master gave orders that I should be conducted thither, and the next day I reached l'Orient, when I was entered in the jailor's book, at Pontainau, the naval prison, near the new Bagne, which was to be peopled by convicts brought hither from Brest.

Being next day questioned by the commissary of the marine, I again declared that I was Auguste Duval; and that I had left my ship without permission, to go and see my parents. I was then led back to prison, where I found, amongst other sailors, a young man of l'Orient, accused of striking a lieuteuant. Having talked sometime with him, he said to me one morning, "My boy, if you will pay for breakfast, I will tell you a secret worth knowing." His mysterious air disturbed me, and made me anxious to know all; and after breakfast he said to me, "Trust to me and then I can extricate you. I do not know who you are, but I am sure you are not young Duval, for he has been dead these two years, at Saint Pierre, at Martinique. (I started.) Yes, he has been dead these two years, but no one knows it, so well are our colonial hospitals regulated. Now I can give you such statements about his family, that you may pass for him even with his parents, for he left home when he was very young. To make quite sure, you can feign a weakness of intellect, produced by sea toil and sickness. Besides, before Auguste Duval went to sea, he had a mark tatooed on his left arm, as most sailors have; I know it well; it was an altar with a garland on it. If you will remain a fortnight in the cell with me, I will mark you in a similar manner, so that all the world could not detect the imposture."

My friend appeared frank and open-hearted, and I may account for the interest he took in me, by his desire to trick justice, a feeling that pervades the minds of all prisoners; for them to deceive it, mislead it, or delay it, is a pleasurable vengeance, which they willingly purchase at the expense of a few weeks' confinement. Here was such an opportunity, and the means were soon put in action. Under the windows of our room was a sentinel, and we began by pelting him with pieces of bread; and as he threatened to tell the jailor of us, we dared him to put his menaces into execution. On this, when he was relieved, the corporal, who was a meddling fellow, went to the office; and the next moment the jailor came to take us, without even telling us the reason of our removal. But we soon found it out, on entering a sort of hole in the sunken ditch, very damp, but tolerably light. Scarcely were we shut in, than my comrade commenced operations, in which he perfectly succeeded. It consisted only in pricking my arm with several needles tied together, and dipped in Indian ink and carmine. At the end of twelve days the wounds closed, so that it was impossible to tell how long they had been made. My companion also took advantage of this "leisure undisturbed," to give me additional details concerning the Duval family, whom he had known from childhood, and was in fact related to them, and instructed even in the minutest habitual trick of my Sosia.

These instructions were of unspeakable advantage to me, when, on the sixteenth day after of our detention in the dungeon, I was taken out to be confronted with my father, whom the commissary of marine had sent for. My comrade had so well described him, that I could not be mistaken on perceiving him. I threw my arms about his neck; he recognized me; his wife, who came soon after, recognized me; a female cousin and an uncle recognized me; and I was so undoubtedly Auguste Duval, that the commissary himself was convinced of it! But this was not sufficient to procure

my liberation; as a deserter from the Cocarde, I was to be sent to Saint Malo, where she had left several men at the hospital, and then be tried before the maritime court. To tell the truth, I felt no alarm at all this; certain that I should find means of escape on my journey, I set out at length, bathed with my parents' tears, and the richer by several louis, which I added to the stock already concealed about me.

Until we reached Quimper, where I was to be handed over to another guard, no opportunity presented of bidding adieu to the company of gendarmes who guarded me, as well as many other individuals, robbers, smugglers, or deserters. We were placed in the town jail, and on entering the chamber where I was to pass the night, I saw at the foot of the bed a red frock, marked on the back GAL., initials but too well known to me. There, covered with a tattered quilt, slept a man, whom, by his green cap decked with the tin plate numbered, I recognized as a galley-slave. Would he know, would he betray me? I was in a spasm of fear, when the individual, awakened by the noise of bolts and bars, sat up in his bed, and I knew him to be a young fellow named Goupy, who went to Brest at the same time as myself. He was condemned to chains for life, for a forcible burglary in the environs of Bernai, in Normandy; his father was a galley serjeant at Brest, where, most probably, he did not come first purely for change of air. Not wishing to have him continually before his sight, he had procured an order for his removal to the Bagne at Rochfort, and he was then on his road thither. I told him all my affairs, and he promised secrecy, and kept his promise the more faithfully, as it would have profited him nothing to betray me.

However, the guard did not stir immediately, and fifteen days elapsed after my arrival at Quimper, without any mention of departure. This delay gave me the idea of penetrating the wall and escaping; but having found the impossibility of success, I managed

so as to obtain the confidence of the jailor, and got an opportunity of executing my project by inspiring him with an idea of false security. After having told him that I had heard the prisoners plotting something, I pointed out to him the place in the prison where they had been at work. He made most minute search, and naturally enough found the hole I had made; and this discovery procured for me all his kindness. I sometimes found it overpowering, for the watch was kept so regularly that all my schemes were routed. I began to think of going to the hospital, where I hoped to be more fortunate in the execution of my projects. To give myself a high fever, it was only necessary to swallow tobacco juice for a couple of days, and then the doctors ordered my removal. On getting to the house, I got in exchange for my clothes a grey cap and cloak, and was then put along with the rest.

It was a part of my plan to remain for some time at the hospital, that I might know the ways in and out, but the illness caused by the tobacco juice would only last for three or four days, and it was necessary to find some recipe which would bring on another complaint; for, knowing no one in the place, it was impossible for me to get a supply of tobacco juice. At Bicetre, I had been taught how to produce those wounds and sores, by means of which so many beggars excite public pity, and get those alms which cannot be worse bestowed. Of all these expedients, I adopted that which consisted in making the head swell like a bushel; first, because the doctors would be certainly mistaken; and then because it gave no pain, and all traces of it could be removed by the day following. My head became suddenly of a prodigious size, and great was the talk thereof amongst the doctors of the establishment, who, not being as it appeared blessed with a superabundance of skill, knew not what to think of it. I believe some of them spoke of elephantiasis, or of dropsy in the brain. But, be that as it may, their brilliant consultation ended in the pre-

scription most common in hospitals, of putting me on the most strict regimen.

With money, such orders did not fret me; but yet I had only gold, and changing that might awaken suspicion. However, I determined to try a liberated convict, who acted as infirmary helper; and this fellow, who would do anything for money, soon procured for me what I desired. On my telling him that I was desirous of getting out into the town for a few hours, he said, that if I disguised myself, it would not be difficult, as the walls were not very high. It was, he said, the way he and his companions got out when they wanted anything. We agreed that he should provide me with clothes, and that he should accompany me in my nocturnal excursion, which was to be a visit to sup with some girls. But the only clothes he could procure for me inside the hospital were much too small, and we were compelled to suspend operations for a time.

Just at this time, one of the sisters of charity passed by my bed, whom I had already watched in performing very mundane duties; not that sister Françoise was one of those dandified nuns who were ridiculed on the stage, before the young nuns were transformed into boarders, and the white handkerchief was replaced by the green apron. Sister Françoise was about thirty-four, a brunette, with a deep colour, and her powerful charms created more than one unhappy passion, as well amongst the soldiers as the infirmary overseers. On seeing this seducing creature, who weighed perhaps nearly fifteen stone, the idea occurred to me that I would borrow for a short time her cloister garb. I spoke of it jestingly to my overseer, but he took it as if meant seriously, and promised on the ensuing night to get a part of sister Françoise's wardrobe. About two in the morning, I saw him come with a parcel, containing a gown, handkerchief, stockings, &c. which he had carried off from the sister's cell whilst she was at matins. All my bed-room companions, nine in

number, were soundly asleep, but I went out to put on my attire. What gave me the most trouble was the head-dress. I had no idea of the mode of arranging it, and yet the appearance of disorder in these garments, always arranged with a scrupulous nicety, would have infallibly betrayed me.

At length, sister Vidocq finished her toilet, and we crossed the courts and gardens, and reached a place where the wall could be easily scaled. I then gave the overseer fifty francs, nearly all my store; he lent me a hand, and I was soon in a lonely spot, whence I reached the country, guided by my indefinite directions. Although much encumbered with my petticoats, I yet walked so fast as to get on at least two leagues before sun-rise. A countryman whom I met, going to sell his vegetables at Quimper, and whom I questioned as to my road, told me that I was journeying towards Brest. This was not the way for me, and I made the fellow comprehend that I wished to go towards Rennes, and he pointed out to me a cross road leading to the high route to this city, which I immediately took, trembling at every moment, lest I should meet any of the soldiers of the English army, then lying in the villages between Nantes and Brest. About ten in the morning, on reaching a small hamlet, I enquired if there were any soldiers near, evincing much fear, which was real however, lest they should examine me, which would have led to a detection. The person whom I asked was a sacristan, full of chatter and inquisitiveness, who compelled me to enter the curate's house near at hand, to take some refreshment.

The curate, an elderly man, whose face betrayed that benevolence so rare amongst the ecclesiastics who come into towns to blazon forth their pretensions and conceal their immorality, received me very kindly. "My dear sister," said he, "I was about to celebrate mass; as soon as that is over, you shall breakfast with us." I was then compelled to go to church, and it

was no trifling embarrassment for me to make the signs and genuflexions prescribed to a nun. Fortunately, the curate's old female servant was at my side, and I got through very well by imitating her in every particular. Mass concluded, we sat down to table, and interrogatories commenced. I told the good people, that I was going to Rennes to perform penance. The curate asked nothing more; but the sacristan, pressing me rather importunately to know why I was thus punished, I told him, "Alas! it was for curiosity!" This closed the little man's mouth. My situation was, however, one of difficulty; I was afraid to eat, lest I should betray too manly an appetite; and again, I more frequently said 'M. le cure' than 'my dear brother;' so that my blunders would have betrayed all, had I not terminated the breakfast. I found means, however, to learn the names of the villages of the district, and, strengthened by the blessings of the curate, who promised not to forget me in his prayers, I went on my way somewhat more accustomed to my new attire.

I met few people on my way, the wars of the revolution had depopulated the wretched country, and I traversed the villages whilst the inhabitants were all in bed. Arriving one night at a hamlet, composed of a few houses, I knocked at the door of a farm-house. An old woman came to open it to me, and conducted me to a good-sized parlour, but which might have disputed the pre-eminence in dirt with the filthiest hovels of Galicia or the Asturias. The family consisted of father, mother, a young lad, and two girls, from fifteen to seventeen years of age. When I went in, they were making a kind of cake of buck-wheat flour, and were all around the fryingpan; and the group, reflected on à la Rembrandt, by the light of the fire only, formed a picture which a painter would have admired: but as for me, who had scarcely time to pay attention to the effects of the light, I expressed my desire for some refreshment. Out of respect to my sacred office, they

gave me the first cakes, which I devoured without even feeling that they were so burning hot as to scorch my palate. I have often since sat down at sumptuous tables, where I have had abundance of most exquisite wines, and meats of the most delicate and delicious flavour, but I can never forget the cakes of the peasant of Lower Brittany.

On the termination of supper we had prayers, and then the father and mother lighted their pipes. Suffering greatly from agitation and fatigue, I expressed a wish to retire. "We have no bed to give you," said the master of the house, who, having been a sailor, spoke very good French: "you shall sleep with my two girls." I observed to him that going on a vow I must sleep on straw, adding that I should be contented with a corner in the stable. "Oh;" replied he, "in sleeping with Jeanne and Madelon you will not break your vow, for the bed is only made of straw. Besides, you cannot be in the stable, for that is already occupied by a tinker and two soldiers, who asked my leave to pass the night there." I could say nothing more; and but too glad to escape the soldiery, I reached the boudoir of the young ladies. It was a loft filled with cider apples, cheese, and smoked bacon: in one corner a dozen fowls were roosting, and lower down were hutched eight rabbits. The furniture consisted of a dilapidated pitcher, worm-eaten joint-stool, and the fragment of a looking-glass; the bed, like all in that country, was only a chest shaped like a coffin, half-filled with straw, and scarcely three feet wide.

Here was a fresh embarrassment for me; the two young girls undressed very deliberately before me, who had many and good reasons for seeming very shy. Independently of circumstances that may be guessed, I had under my female attire a man's shirt, which would betray my sex and my incognito. Not to be detected I took out a few pins very slowly, and when I saw the two sisters had got into bed I overturned, as if by accident, the iron lamp which lighted

us, and then took off my feminine habits without fear. On getting between the sail-cloth sheets I laid down so as to avoid all unlucky detection. It was a tormenting night: for without being pretty, mademoiselle Jeanne, who could not stir without touching me, had a freshness and plumpness but too attractive for a man condemned for so long a period to the rigours of absolute celibacy. Those, who have ever been in a similar situation, will believe without difficulty that I could not sleep for a single instant.

I was motionless, with my eyes open like a hare in its form, when long before daylight I heard a knocking with the butt end of a musket against the door. My first idea, like every man in similar circumstances, was that they had traced me, and were coming to apprehend me; but I did not know where to conceal myself. The blows were redoubled: and I then bethought me of the soldiers sleeping in the stable, which dissipated my fears. "Who is there?" said the master of the house, leaping up.—"Your soldiers."—"Well, what do you want?"—"Fire to light our pipes before we set off." Our host then arose, and blowing up the fire left in the ashes, he opened the door to the soldiers. One of these, looking at his watch by the lamp-light, said, "It is half-past four o'clock. Come, let us go; the rations are in good order. Come, to the march, my lads." They went away, and our host, putting out the lamp, went to bed again. As for me, not wishing to dress myself in presence of my bedfellows any more than undress myself, I immediately rose, and lighting the lamp, put on my woollen gown, and then going down on my knees in a corner, pretended to pray until the family should awake. I did not remain long in waiting. At five o'clock in the morning the mother cried from her bed, "Jeanne, get up, and get some soup ready for the sister, who wishes to depart early." Jeanne got up, and the butter-milk soup having been made and eaten with good appetite,

I left the good persons who had so kindly welcomed me.

Having walked all day without flagging, I found myself at the close of the day in a village near the environs of Vannes, when I remembered I had been deceived by false or mistaken directions. I slept at this village, and the next day I went through Vannes at a very early hour. My intention was to get to Rennes; but on leaving Vannes I met a person who induced me to change my intention. On the same route was a woman walking slowly, followed by a young child, and carrying on her back a box of relics, which she showed in the villages, whilst singing doleful ditties, selling rings of St Hubert, or holy chaplets. This woman told me that she was going to Nantes by cross roads. I was desirous of avoiding the high road, and did not hesitate to follow my new guide. Besides, at Nantes I had resources which would be lacking to me at Rennes, as we shall see.

At the end of eight days' walk, we reached Nantes, when I left the woman and her relics at her lodgings in the suburbs. As for me, I enquired for the Ile Feydeau. When at the Bicêtre I had learnt from a man named Grenier, called the Nantais, that there was in this quarter a kind of auberge, where robbers met without fear of disturbance. I knew that by using a well-known name I should be admitted without difficulty; but I only remembered the address very vaguely, and scarcely knew how and where to find out the place. I adopted an expedient which succeeded. I went into many houses and asked for M. Grenier; at the fourth where I sought for this name, the hostess, leaving two persons with whom she was conversing, took me into a small room and said to me, "Have you seen Grenier? Is he still sick (in prison)?"—"No," answered I, "he is well (free)." And perceiving that I was all right with the mother of robbers, I told her unhesitatingly who I was, and how I was

situated. Without replying, she took my arm, and opening a door let into the pannel, made me enter a low room where eight men and women were playing at cards and drinking brandy, &c. "Here," said my guide, presenting me to the goodly party, much astonished at the appearance of a nun, "here is a sister come to convert you all." At the same time I tore off my handkerchief, and three of the party, whom I had met at the Bagne, recognized me; they were Berry, Bidaut Mauger, and the young Goupy, whom I had met at Quimper; the others were fugitives from the Bagne of Rochfort. They were much amused at my disguise; and when supper had made us all very jolly, one of the females put on my nun's habits, and her gestures and attitudes, contrasted so strangely with this costume, that we all laughed till we cried, until the moment when we went to bed.

On waking, I found on my bed new clothes, linen, and in fact everything necessary for my toilet. Whence did they come? But this was of no consequence. The little money which I had not expended at the hospital of Quimper, where I paid dearly for everything, had been used on my journey; and without clothes, resources, or acquaintances, I was compelled to wait until I could write to my mother; and in the mean time accepted all that was offered me. But one circumstance of a particular nature abridged my stay at the Ile Feydeau. At the end of a week, my companions seeing me perfectly recovered from my fatigues, told me one evening that they intended on the next day to break into a house on the Place Graslin, and relied on my going with them; I was even to have the post of honour, that of working inside with Maguer.

But I did not intend to do this, and thought how I could make use of the circumstance to get away and go to Paris, where, near my family, my resources would not fail me; but it never entered into my calculations to enrol myself in a band of thieves; for although I

had associated with robbers, and lived by my wits, I felt an invincible repugnance to entering on a career of crimes, of which early experience had taught me the perils and risks. A refusal would, on the other hand, render me suspected by my new companions, who, in this retreat, secure from sight or hearing, could knock me on the head with impunity, and send me to keep company with the salmons and smelts of the Loire; and I had only one course to take, which was to set out as quickly as possible, and this I resolved on doing.

Having exchanged my new clothes for a countryman's frock and eighteen francs to boot, I left Nantes, carrying at the end of a stick a basket of provisions, which gave me at once the appearance of an inhabitant of the environs. It is useless to observe, that I struck into the cross roads, where, by the bye, the gendarmes would be better stationed than on the high road, where persons who have any motives for avoiding justice rarely show themselves. This observation is applicable besides to the system of municipal police, whence, as I think, immense advantages could be drawn. Confined only to security, properly so called, it would then follow from one place to another the traces of malefactors who, now once striking out from the radius of large towns, defy all researches. At different periods, and always at seasons of great calamities, when the Chauffeurs were infesting the north; when famine desolated the districts of Calvados and Eure; when the Oise saw conflagrations nightly blazing; partial applications of this system were made, and the results proved the efficacy of the arrangement.

CHAPTER XI.

The market-place at Cholet—Arrival at Paris—History of captain Villedieu.

On quitting Nantes, I walked for a day and two nights without stopping at any village, and my provisions were exhausted; still I went on hap-hazard, although decided on reaching Paris or the sea shore, hoping to get to sea in some ship, when I reached the first habitations of a town which appeared to have been lately the scene of a combat. The greater part of the houses were nothing but a heap of rubbish, blackened by fire, and all that surrounded the place had been entirely destroyed. Nothing was standing but the church tower, whence the clock was striking the hour for inhabitants who no longer existed. This scene of desolation presented at the same time the most whimsical occurrences. On the only piece of wall which remained belonging to an auberge, were still the words "Good entertainment for man and horse;"—there the soldiers were watering their horses in the holy-water vessels;—farther on, their companions were dancing to the tune of an organ with the countrywomen, who, ruined and wretched, had prostituted themselves to the Blues (republicans) for bread. By the traces of this war of extermination we might have thought ourselves in the midst of the wilds of America, or the oases of the desert, where barbarous tribes were cutting each others' throats with blind fury. Yet there had only been there, on both sides, Frenchmen: but every species of fanaticism made rendezvous there. I was in La Vendée, at Cholet.

The master of a wretched cabaret, thatched with broom, where I halted, gave me my cue, by asking me if I had come to Cholet for the next day's market. I answered in the affirmative, much astonished that one

should be held in the midst of these ruins, and even that the farmers of the environs had anything to sell; but my host told me that scarcely anything was brought to this market but cattle from distant districts; on the other hand, although no one had yet done anything to repair the disasters of the war, the amnesty was nearly terminated by general Hoche, and if republican soldiers were still found in the country it was that they might keep down the chouans,* who were becoming formidable.

I went to the market early the next day, and thinking to take advantage of it, I accosted a cattle-dealer, whose face was familiar to me, asking him to listen to me for a moment. He looked at me with distrust, taking me probably for a spy, but I hastened to relieve his suspicions, telling him that it was only a personal affair. We then entered a hovel where they sold brandy, and I then told him, that having deserted from the 36th demi-brigade to see my parents, who lived at Paris, I was desirous of getting some situation which would allow me to reach my destination without fear of arrest. This good fellow told me that he had no situation to offer me, but that if I would drive a drove of oxen as far as Sceaux, I might go with him. No proposal was ever accepted with more readiness, and I entered on my duties instantly, anxious to show my new master all the return I could testify for his kindness.

In the afternoon he sent me to carry a letter to a person in the town, who asked me if my master had desired me to take anything back with me; I said no, "Never mind," said the person, who was, I believe,

* Chouans, a contraction of the word chat-huant, a screech-owl; a title given to parties of Vendéeans, and afterwards to bands formed for plunder, who ravaged the western part of France subsequently to 1793, and were called by this name because, like owls, they came out only at night.—*Translator.*

a notary, "take him this bag with three hundred francs." I delivered this sum to the cattle dealer, to whom my punctuality gave confidence. We set out next day, and on the third morning my master calling to me, said, "Louis, can you write?"—"Yes, sir." "Reckon?"—"Yes, sir." "Keep an account?"—"Yes, sir."—"Ah, well; as I must go out of the road to see some lean beasts, at St Gauburge, you will drive the oxen on to Paris, with Jacques and Saturnin: you will be head man." He then gave me his instructions and left us.

By reason of my advancement, I no longer travelled on foot, which was a great relief to me; for the drivers of cattle are always stifled with dust, or up to their knees in mud, which increases as they proceed. I was besides, better paid and better fed, but I did not abuse these advantages, as I saw many other head drovers do on the journey. Whilst the food of the animals was converted by them into pullets, or legs of mutton, or exchanged with the innkeepers, the poor brutes grew visibly thinner.

I behaved myself most faithfully, so that on joining us at Verneuil, my master, who had preceded us, complimented me on the state of the drove. On reaching Sceaux, my beasts were worth twenty francs a-head more than any others, and I had spent ninety francs less than my companions for my travelling expenses. My master, enchanted, made me a present of forty francs, and cited me as the Aristides of cattle drovers, and I was in some sort quite an object of admiration at the market of Sceaux, and, in return, my colleagues would willingly have knocked me on the head. One of them, a chap of Lower Normandy, famed for strength and skill, endeavoured to disgust me with my avocation, by taking upon himself to inflict the popular vengeance upon me; but what could such a clumsy yokel do against the pupil of the renowned Goupy! The Low Norman cried craven, after one of the most

memorable boxing matches of which the inhabitants of a fat cattle market ever preserved a remembrance.

My conquest was the more glorious, as I had testified much forbearance, and had only consented to fight when it would have been impossible to avoid it. My master, more and more satisfied with me, wished absolutely to engage me for a year, as foreman, promising me a small share of the profits. I had received no news of my mother; and here I found resources which I was about to seek at Paris; and, besides, my new dress disguised me so much that I felt no fear of detection in my frequent excursions to Paris. I passed, in fact, many persons of my acquaintance, who paid no attention to me. But one evening as I was passing along the Rue Dauphine, to get to the Barrière d'Enfer, some one tapped me on the shoulder. My first thought was to run for it, without turning round, being aware that, whoever thus stops you, relies on your looking back to seize you; but a stoppage of carriages choked up the passage. I therefore waited the result, and in a twinkling discovered that it was a false alarm.

The person who had so much alarmed me, was no other than Villedieu, the captain of the 13th chasseurs, with whom I had been intimately acquainted at Lille. Although surprised to see me with a hat covered with waxed cloth, a smock frock, and leathern gaiters, he testified much pleasure at the meeting, and invited me to supper, saying that he had some marvellous narratives to tell me. He was not in his uniform, but this did not astonish me, as the officers commonly wore common clothes when staying in Paris. What struck me most was his uneasy air and excessive paleness. As he expressed a wish to sup out of the barriers, we took a coach which conveyed us to Sceaux.

On reaching the Grand Cerf, we asked for a private room. We were scarcely served with what we asked for, when Villedieu, double-locking the door and

putting the key in his pocket, said to me, with tears in his eyes, and with a wild air, "My friend, I am a lost man! Lost! undone! I am pursued, and you must get me a habit similar to your own. If you want it, I have money, plenty of money, and we will start for Switzerland together. I know your skill at escapes, and you, and you only can extricate me."

This commencement did not place me upon a seat of velvet; already much embarrassed myself, I did not much care to place myself again in the way of being apprehended, and to unite my fortunes with those of a man hotly pursued might lead to my detection. This reasoning, which I made to myself, decided me on being wary with Villedieu; and besides, as yet I did not know exactly what he wished to do. At Lille, I had seen him spending much more than his pay; but a young and handsome officer has so many ways of procuring money, that no one thinks any harm of that. I was then greatly astonished at the following details.

"I will not speak to you of those circumstances in my life which preceded your acquaintance with me; it will suffice to say, that as brave and intelligent as most, and backed with good interest, I found myself, at the age of thirty-four, a captain of chasseurs, when I met you at Lille, at the Café de la Montagne. There I associated with an individual whose honest appearance prepossessed me in his favour, and our intimacy ripened into so close a friendship that he introduced me to his house. It was one replete with comfort and elegance, and I received every attention and token of amity; so good a fellow was M. Lemaire, so charming a woman was madame Lemaire. A jeweller, travelling about with his articles of trade, he made frequent absences of six or eight days; but still I visited his wife, and you may guess that I soon became her lover. Lemaire did not perceive, or would not perceive it. I led, to be sure, a most agreeable life, when one morning I found Josephine in tears. Her

husband, she told me, had just been apprehended, with his clerk, for having sold unstamped plate, and as it was probable that his house would be soon visited, all its contents must be speedily removed. The most valuable goods were then packed in my portmanteau, and conveyed to my lodgings. Josephine then entreated me to go to Courtrai, where the influence of my rank might be of avail to her husband. I did not hesitate for a moment, for so deeply was I enamoured of this woman that I would have given up the exercise of my faculties if I did not think as she thought, and wish what she wished.

"Having obtained my colonel's permission, I sent for horses and a post chaise, and set out with the express who had brought the news of Lemaire's arrest. I did not at all like this man's face, and what prejudiced me against him was, to hear him thee and thou (tutoyer) Josephine, and treat her with much familiarity. Scarcely had I got into the carriage, when he installed himself at ease in one corner and slept till we reached Menin, where I stopped to take some refreshment. 'Captain, I do not wish to get out,' said he familiarly and rousing himself; 'be so good as to bring me a glass of brandy.' Much surprised at this tone, I sent what he asked for by the waiting-maid, who returned to me, saying that he would not answer her, but was asleep. I went to the chaise, where I saw my gentleman motionless in his corner, his face being covered with a handkerchief, 'Are you asleep?' said I in a low tone. 'No,' he replied, 'nor do I wish to be, but why the devil did you send a servant when I tell you that I do not wish to face these gentry. I gave him his glass of brandy and we started again. As he did not appear disposed for sleep, I asked him carelessly his reason for preserving so strict an incognito, and concerning the business which led me to Courtrai, of which I knew no details. He then told me, that Lemaire was accused of belonging to a band of Chauffeurs, and added, that he had not told

Josephine, for fear of increasing her affliction. We drew near Courtrai, and about four hundred paces from the town my companion called to the postillion to stop for an instant; he then put on a wig, concealed in the crown of his hat, stuck a large plaster on his left eye, took from under his waistcoat a brace of pistols, primed them, returned them to the belt under his vest, opened the door, jumped out and disappeared.

"All these manœuvres, which were perfect mysteries to me, only served to create great uneasiness. Could it be that Lemaire's arrest was only a pretext. Was he laying a snare for me? Did he wish me to play some part in an intrigue of any kind? I could not explain it to myself, nor think it was so. I was still very uncertain what to do, and was pacing the chamber with long strides at the Hotel du Damier, where my mysterious companion had advised me to alight, when the door suddenly opened and I saw—Josephine. At her appearance all suspicions vanished. Her abrupt entrance, her hurried journey made without me, and some hours after, whilst she might easily have had part of my chaise and my protection, ought rather perhaps to have excited them. But I was in love, and when Josephine told me that she could not endure an absence, I thought her argument and explanation admirable and unanswerable. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and Josephine dressed herself, and, going out, did not return till ten o'clock. She was accompanied by a man dressed like a peasant of Liège, but whose manner and expression of countenance did not agree with his costume.

"Some refreshments were brought in, and the servants then leaving us, Josephine immediately throwing herself on my neck, begged me to save her husband, repeating, that it only depended on me to do this. I promised all she asked, and then the pretended peasant, who had till this time been perfectly silent, spoke in very good language, and unfolded to me what I was

required to do. Lemaire, he said, reached Courtrai, with several travellers, whom he did not know, and had only met on the road, when they were surrounded by a body of gendarmes, who summoned them to surrender. The strangers stood on the defensive, and pistol shots were exchanged, and Lemaire, who, with his clerk, had remained neuter on the field of battle, had been seized without making any effort to escape, feeling a consciousness of innocence, and that he had nothing to fear. But very serious charges had been produced against him; he was unable to give a very precise account of his business in the district, because, said the assumed countryman, he was then smuggling; besides, they had found in a bush two pair of pistols, which it was asserted had been thrown there by himself and clerk, at the moment they were apprehended, and finally, a woman swore that she had seen him the week before on the road to Ghent, with the identical travellers, whom he said he had not met before the morning of the engagement with the gendarmes.

"'Under these circumstances,' added my peasant interlocutor, 'we must find means of proving—

"'1st. That Lemaire has only left Lille three days, and that he had then been there for the entire month previously.

"'2nd. That he never carries pistols.

"'3rd. That before starting he received sixty louis from some person.'

"This confidence ought to have opened my eyes as to the nature of the steps required of me; but, intoxicated with Josephine's caresses, I drove away all thoughts, and compelled myself not to think of what might be the results. We all three sat out the same night for Lille, and on arriving I ran about all day making the necessary arrangements, and by evening all my witnesses were ready.* Their depositions had no

* This may appear surprising, but astonishment will cease when we learn by how many testimonies of such a nature

sooner reached Courtrai, than Lemaire and his clerk were set at liberty. We may imagine their joy; and it was in fact so excessive, that I could not help thinking that the case must have been critical indeed, if their liberation could occasion such transports. The day after his arrival, dining with Lemaire, I found in my napkin a rouleau of a hundred louis. I was weak enough to accept them, and from that hour my ruin was decreed.

Playing high, treating my comrades, and having habits of luxury, I soon spent this sum. Lemaire daily made me fresh offers of service, by which I profitted to borrow several sums of him, amounting to two thousand francs, without being any the richer or more moderate. Fifteen hundred francs borrowed of a Jew, on a post obit for a thousand crowns, and twenty-five louis which the quarter-master advanced me, disappeared with the same alacrity. At last I spent even a sum of five hundred francs which my lieutenant had begged me to keep for him until the arrival of his horse-dealer, to whom he owed this sum. This I lost on one evening at the Café de la Montagne, with a man named Carré, who had already ruined half the regiment.

"The night that followed was a fearful one; agitated by the shame of having abused the confidence of the lieutenant, by squandering what was his little all; enraged at being duped, and tormented with the desire of still playing on; I was twenty times tempted to blow my brains out. When the trumpets sounded the turn-out, I had not closed my eyes; it was my week, and I went out to go through the examination of the stables; the first person I met was the lieutenant, who told me that the horse-dealer had arrived, and he

the course of justice is perverted. We have recently seen, at the court of assize at Cahors, half the inhabitants of a corporation state a plain fact in direct opposition to the assertion of the other half.

would send his servant for the five hundred francs. My agitation was so great that I answered I scarcely knew what, and the obscurity of the stable alone prevented him from observing my confusion. There was not a moment to lose, if I would not forfeit my good name with my superiors and brother officers.

"In this horrid situation I did not even think of applying to Lemaire, so much I already imagined that I had abused his friendship; but I had no other resource, and, at length, I resolved on writing him a note, stating the embarrassment in which I was placed. He came to me instantly, and laying on the table two gold snuff boxes, three watches and twelve engraved spoons, he told me that he had no ready money at the moment, but that I could easily procure it by taking these valuables to the pawnbrokers, and he left them at my disposal. After overwhelming him with thanks, I sent the whole to be pledged by my servant, who brought me twelve hundred francs for them. I first paid the lieutenant, and then led by my unlucky star, I flew to the Café de la Montagne, when Carré, after much persuasion, was induced to give me my revenge, and the remaining seven hundred francs passed from my purse to his.

"Aghast at this last stroke of fortune, I wandered for some time about the streets of Lille, whilst a thousand mad ideas flashed through my brain. It was in this mood that I imperceptibly drew near to Lemaire's house, which I entered mechanically; they were sitting down to dinner, and Josephine, struck by my extreme paleness, questioned me with interest concerning my affairs and my health; I was in one of those dejected moods whence the consciousness of his weakness makes the most reserved more communicative. I confessed all my extravagancies, adding that within two months I must pay more than four thousand francs, of which I had not a single sous.

"At these words Lemaire looked fixedly at me, with a gaze I can never forget all my life, be it long or short.

'Captain,' said he, 'I will not forsake you in your difficulties, but one confidence deserves another; nothing should be kept from a man who has saved you from—' and with a horrid smile he passed his hand across his throat. I trembled, and looked at Josephine. She was perfectly calm! It was a horrible moment! Without seeming to notice my perturbation, Lemaire continued his fearful confidence. I learnt that he was one of Sallambier's band, and that, when the gendarmes had apprehended him near Courtrai, they were returning from a party of plunder in a country-house in the vicinity of Ghent. The servants had defended themselves, and three had been killed, and two wretched women were hung up in a cellar. The valuables I had pawned were the produce of the robbery which had followed these atrocities! After having explained to me how he had been apprehended near Courtrai, whilst making off, Lemaire added that henceforward it was only for me to repair my losses and better my fortune by accompanying him in two or three expeditions.

"I was annihilated! Up to this period the conduct of Lemaire, the circumstances of his arrest, the nature of the service which I had rendered him, appeared to me very suspicious; but I carefully drove from my thoughts all that could convert my suspicions into reality. As if tormented by a frightful nightmare, I waited till I should awake, and my waking was more horrible still!

"'Well,' said Josephine, with an inquiring tone, 'you do not answer—Ah! I see, we have lost your friendship; and I shall die!' She burst into tears: my head was in a whirl: forgetful of Lemaire's presence, I threw myself on my knees like a madman, crying out, 'I quit you? no, never, never!' Tears choked my utterance, and I saw a tear in Josephine's eyes, but she instantly resumed her firmness. For Lemaire, he offered us orange-flower water with as much

calmness as a cavalier presents an ice to his partner at a ball.

"I was thus enlisted in this band, the terror of the departments of the North, la Lys and l'Escaut. In less than fifteen days I was introduced to Sallambier, in whom I recognized the peasant of Liège; to Duhamel, Chopiné, Calandrin, and the principal Chauffeurs. The first business in which I took a share was in the environs of Douai. Duhamel's mistress, who accompanied us, introduced us to the house, in which she had been waiting-maid. The dogs having been poisoned by a wood-cutter employed on the premises, we only waited until the family should be asleep, to commence our operations. No locks could resist Calandrin, and we reached the drawing room with the utmost silence. The family, consisting of the father, mother, great aunt, two young persons, and a relation on a visit, were playing at Bouillotte. We only heard the words, 'Pass, I hold; I play Charlemagne,' &c.; when Sallambier, opening the door quickly, appeared, followed by ten men with blackened faces, and pistols and daggers in their hands. At this sight the cards fell from the hands of all; the females shrieked for mercy, until, with a motion of his hand, Sallambier compelled silence, whilst one of our band, jumping like a monkey on the mantlepiece, cut the ropes of the bells. The women fainted, but were not heeded. The master of the house alone retained some presence of mind. After having opened his mouth at least twenty times without uttering a word, he at length contrived to ask what we wanted? 'Money,' said Sallambier, whose voice seemed to me entirely changed; and taking the candle from the card-table, he made signs to the master of the house to follow him into the next room, where we knew that the money and jewels were deposited. It was precisely Don Juan preceding the statue of the Commandant.

"We remained in the dark, motionless at our posts,

only hearing the stifled sobs of the females, the chink of money, and these words, 'More, more,' which Sallambier repeated from time to time in a sepulchral tone. At the end of twenty minutes he returned with a red handkerchief, tied together by the corners and filled with pieces of money; the jewels were in his pockets. To neglect nothing, they took from the old aunt and the mother their earrings, as well as the watch of the relation who had so well chosen the time to make his visit. We set out at last, after having carefully locked up the whole party, without the servants, who had been for some time in bed, being at all disturbed or aware of the attack in the château.

"I had a share also in several other enterprizes, more hazardous than that I now mention. We were resisted, or else the proprietors had concealed their money, and to make them produce it they were put to most dreadful tortures. At first they confined themselves to burning the soles of their feet with red-hot shovels; but adopting more expeditious measures, they began to tear out the nails of those who were obstinate, or blow them as large as balloons with bellows. Some of these unfortunates, having really no money, as was supposed, died in the midst of these tortures. See, my friend, on what a career I had entered; I, an officer well born, for whom twelve years of active service, some exploits of bravery, and the testimony of my comrades, had created an universal esteem, which he had ceased to deserve for a very long time, and which he was about to lose for ever."

Here Villedieu paused and dropped his head upon his breast, like one overwhelmed by his recollections. I left him undisturbed for a moment, but the names he mentioned were too well known to me not to excite the most lively curiosity in my mind to hear the whole of his recital. A few glasses of champagne restored his energy, and he thus continued:—

"But crimes multiplied so alarmingly, that the gen-

darmes not being sufficiently powerful to check them, columns of the military were taken from the various garrisons. One was placed under my command. You may suppose that this measure had an entirely contrary effect to that intended; for warned by me, the Chauffeurs avoided the places that I was to watch with my division. Thus matters went on worse than ever, and the authorities were at a loss what plans to adopt, when they learnt that the majority of the Chauffeurs resided at Lille, and the order was given for redoubling the superintendence (surveillance) at the gates. We found means however to render all these precautions useless. Sallambier procured at a broker's of the town, who clothed a regiment, fifteen uniforms of the 13th chasseurs, and disguised with them that number of Chauffeurs, who, with me at their head, went out at twilight, as if going on a detachment of a secret enterprize.

"Although this stratagem completely answered, I thought I perceived myself to be the object of particular surveillance. A report spread about that there were men in the vicinity of Lille disguised as horse chasseurs. The colonel appeared to mistrust me, and one of my brother officers was appointed alternately to direct the moving columns before entrusted to my charge alone. Instead of giving me the watch-word, as to the other officers of gendarmes, I was not informed of it until the moment of departure. At length I was so directly accused, that I was under the necessity of enquiring of the colonel, who, without any disguise, told me that I was reported to have communication with the Chauffeurs. I defended myself as well as I could, and thus matters remained, only that I left the service of the moving columns, which began to be so active that the Chauffeurs scarcely durst show themselves.

"Sallambier, unwilling to remain long in inaction, redoubled his audacity in proportion as obstacles multiplied about us. In one night he committed three

robberies in the same district. But the proprietors of the first of the houses attacked having divested themselves of their gags and bonds, gave the alarm. The tocsin was sounded for two leagues round, and the Chauffeurs only owed their safety to the fleetness of their horses. The two brothers Sallambier were hotly followed, and it was only on approaching Bruges that they distanced their pursuers. In a large village where they were, they hired a chaise and two horses, to go, as they said, some leagues and return in the evening.

" A coachman drove them, whom, on getting to the water's edge, the elder Sallambier struck from behind with his knife, and knocked him from his seat. The two brothers then threw him into the sea, hoping that the waves would retain the corpse. Masters of the conveyance, they went on their journey, when, towards the close of day, they met a countryman who bade them good evening. As they did not answer, the man approached, saying, 'Ah! Vandeck, do you not know me? It is I—Joseph.' Sallambier then told him that he had hired the carriage for three days without a conductor. The tone of this answer, the condition of the horses, covered with sweat, and which their master would never have let without a driver, all made the interrogator suspicious. Without prolonging the conversation, he ran to the adjacent village and gave the alarm; seven or eight men on horseback pursued the carriage, which they soon perceived travelling slowly along. They increased their speed and overtook it. It was empty. Rather disappointed, they drove it into an auberge where they intended to pass the night; but scarcely were they seated, when a great noise was heard, occasioned by a crowd conveying before the magistrate two travellers accused of the murder of a man whom some fishermen had found with his throat cut on the sea shore. All ran out, and Joseph recognized the individuals whom he had seen in the carriage, and which they quitted because

the horses could go no farther. They (the two Sallambiers) appeared greatly disconcerted when confronted with Joseph. Their identity was soon settled. Under a suspicion that they might belong to some band of Chauffeurs, they were transferred to Lille, where they were recognized on reaching the Petit Hotel.

"There the elder Sallambier, pressed by the agents of police, denounced all his companions, and pointed out when and where they might be taken. In consequence of this information forty-three persons of both sexes were apprehended. Amongst them were Lemaire and his wife. At the same time an order of arrest was issued against me; but informed by a quarter-master of gendarmes, whom I had served, I escaped and reached Paris, where I have been these ten days. When I met you I was looking for the house of an old sweetheart, where I intended to conceal myself, or obtain some means of escape to a foreign country, but I am now easy, since I meet with Vidocq."

CHAPTER XII.

Journey to Arras—Father Lambert—Vidocq a schoolmaster—Departure for Holland—The "sellers of souls"—The mutiny—The corsair—Catastrophe.

THE confidence of Villedieu flattered me very much; but yet I thought my rencontre with him might lead me into danger. I therefore told him a false tale when he enquired about my mode of life and domicile. For the same reason I took care not to be at the rendezvous which he had appointed for the next day; for it would have been attended with much risk to myself and no advantage to him. On leaving him, at eleven o'clock in the evening, I took the precaution of making many detours before I entered my auberge, for fear of being dogged by any police agents. My master, who had gone to bed, aroused me early in the morning to tell me to set out with him for Nogent le Rotrou, whence we were to proceed to his own farms, situated in the environs of this city.

In four days we arrived at the termination of our journey, and although received in the family as a hardworking and faithful servant, I still persisted in the intention I had formed for some time, of returning to my own country, whence I received neither information nor money. On returning to Paris with some cattle, I told my master of my determination, and he let me go with much reluctance. On quitting him, I entered a café in the Place du Chatelet, to procure a porter to fetch my luggage, and there taking up a newspaper, the first intelligence that met my eyes was an account of Villedieu's capture. He had not allowed himself to be taken before he had prostrated two of the agents of police, who had orders to apprehend him, and was himself severely wounded. On being executed, two months afterwards at Bruges, the last

of eighteen, all his accomplices, he contemplated their headless and bleeding bodies as they fell one by one by his side, with a calmness and fortitude that never wavered for an instant.

This circumstance gave me reason to be satisfied with the step that I had taken. Had I staid with the cattle-dealer, I was under the necessity of coming twice a week to Paris; and the police, directing its attention against all plots and foreign agents, was assuming an extent and energy which might have brought detection on me, as they minutely watched individuals, who, perpetually called by business from the departments of the west, might serve as agents between the Chouans and their friends in the capital. I therefore set out without delay, and on the third day reached Arras, which I entered in the evening, at the time when the workmen were returning home from labour. I did not go directly to my father's house, but to one of my aunts, who informed my parents. They thought me dead, not having received any of my last letters; and I have never been able to discover how and by whom they were intercepted. Having related all my adventures at length, I asked news of my family, which necessarily led to my enquiring for my wife. I was told that my father had for some time received her at his house, but that her conduct was so scandalous, that she had been disgracefully expelled thence. She was, I was informed, pregnant by an attorney, who supplied most of her wants; but that for some time nothing had been heard of her, and they had ceased to trouble themselves concerning her.

I gave myself no care about her, for I had matters of much greater import which demanded my attention. I might be discovered at any moment; and if apprehended at my parents' house they would be involved in difficulties. It was imperative on me to find an asylum where the vigilance of the police was not so active as at Arras, and I threw my eyes upon a village

in the vicinity, Ambercourt, where there resided a quondam carmelite friar, a friend of my father, who agreed to receive me. At this period (1798) priests were compelled still to say mass in secret, although direct hostilities towards them had ceased. Father Lambert, my host, celebrated his divine functions in a barn; and as he had no assistance but from an old man, feeble and impotent, I offered to fulfil the duties of sacristan, which I did so satisfactorily, that one would have supposed it had been my calling all the days of my existence. I also became father Lambert's assistant in giving lessons to the children of the neighbourhood. My skill in teaching made some noise in the district, for I had taken an excellent method to advance my pupils rapidly; I traced the letters with a lead pencil, which they wrote over with the pen, and the Indian rubber effected the rest. The parents were delighted; only it was rather difficult for my scholars to perform without their master; but the Artesian peasants, however cunning in the common transactions of business, were good enough not to find this out.

This sort of life was rather agreeable to me. Clothed as a wandering friar, and tolerated by the authorities, I had no fear of detection or suspicion; on the other hand, my animal tastes, which I have always held in consideration due, were well supplied, the parents sending us perpetually, beer, poultry, and fruit. I had in my classes some pretty peasant girls, who were very teachable. All went on well for some time, but at length a distrust of me was evinced; I was watched, and it was discovered that I pushed my instructions occasionally rather too far, and complaint was made to father Lambert, who told me of the charges against me, which I stoutly denied. The complainants were silenced, but redoubled their vigilance; and one night, when, impelled by classic zeal, I was about to give a lesson in a hay-loft to a female scholar about sixteen years of age, I was seized by four brewers' men, drag-

ged into a hop-ground, stripped of my clothes, and scourged, till the blood flowed copiously, with rods of nettles and thistles. The pain was so acute, that I lost my senses, and on reviving, found myself in the streets, naked, and covered with blisters and blood.

What was to be done? To return to father Lambert would be to incur fresh dangers. The night was not much advanced, and although eaten up with excess of fever, I determined to go on to Mareuil, to an uncle's house, and arrived there at two o'clock in the morning, worn out with fatigue, and only covered with a ragged mat which I had found near a pond. After having laughed unsparingly at my mishap, they rubbed my body all over with cream mixed with oil; and at the end of eight days I set out quite well for Arras, but it was impossible for me to remain there. The police might get information at some unlucky moment that I was there, and I therefore decided on starting for Holland, and fixing myself there, taking with me a supply of money which enabled me to remain at my ease until something should occur that would employ me usefully.

I passed through Brussels (where I learnt that the baroness d'I—— had settled in London), Anvers, and Breda, and then embarked for Rotterdam, in which city I put up at an inn that had been specially recommended to me. I there met with a Frenchman, who was remarkably attentive and civil to me, and frequently invited me to dinner. I received all his advances with mistrust, knowing that all means were resorted to by the Dutch government to recruit their navy. In spite of all my caution, my companion contrived to intoxicate me with a particular liquor, and on the next morning I awoke on board a Dutch brig of war. All doubt was at an end; intemperance had given me up as a prey to the "sellers of souls."

Lying near the shrouds, I was reflecting on my singular destiny, which multiplied so many incidents of my wayward career, when one of the crew, pushing

me with his foot, desired me to rise and get on my sailor's clothes. I pretended not to understand him, and then the boatswain gave me the same orders in French. On my replying that I was not a sailor, since I had signed no agreement, he seized a rope's end to strike me with; on which, I grasped a knife belonging to a sailor, who was breakfasting at the foot of the main-mast, and, placing my back against a gun, I swore I would rip up the first man who should assault me. This occasioned much disturbance in the ship, and brought up the captain, who was a man about forty, of good appearance, and whose manners were free from that coarseness so usual with seafaring people. He listened to me with kindness, which was all he could do, for it was not in his power to change the maritime organization of his government.

In England, where the duty on board a man-of-war is more severe, less profitable, and, above all, less free than in the merchants' ships, the royal navy was manned, and is still manned by the press. In war time the press is carried into effect at sea, on board the merchants' ships, with whom they exchange useless or invalid sailors for vigorous and able-bodied men. On shore it is carried on in the midst of large cities, but it is customary only to press those individuals whose appearance and costume bespeak that they have not been unaccustomed to the sea. In Holland, on the contrary, at the period I now allude to, they acted in pretty nearly the same manner as at Turkey, where in time of need, they seize on and send to the ships of the line, masons, grooms, actors, barbers, &c. &c.; persons, as we may suppose, of the most useful kind. Thus, if on leaving port, a ship be compelled to engage with another, she fails in every manœuvre; and this circumstance may perhaps account for the number of Turkish frigates that have been captured or destroyed by the Greek pirates.

We had then on board men whose inclinations and habits of life were so totally foreign from naval service,

that the very idea of compelling them to enter it was essentially ridiculous. Of the two hundred individuals pressed, like myself, there were not perhaps twenty who had ever set foot on shipboard before. The majority had been carried off by main force, or trepanned by drunkenness: they had inveigled others by a promise of a free passage to Batavia, where they wished to settle; amongst these were two Frenchmen, one a book-keeper from Burgundy, and the other a gardener of Lemosin, who, it is evident, were admirably calculated to make sailors. To console us, the crew told us that, for fear of desertion, we should not go ashore for six months, which is likewise a plan practised in the English fleets, where the sailor may be whole years without seeing any other land than the main-top-gallants of his ship: trustworthy men are made the boats' crews, and foreigners are sometimes employed amongst the crew. To soften the severity of this usage, they allow some of those women who swarm in all the seaports, and whom they call, I know not why, queen Caroline's daughters (les filles de la reine Caroline) to come on board. The English sailors, from whom I have since learnt these details, which we are not to consider as precisely true in every particular, add, that to disguise in some measure the immorality, some puritanical captains occasionally require that these lady visitors should assume the names of sister or cousin.*

To me, who had so long intended to enter the navy, the situation was not so repugnant, if I had not been constrained to it, and if I had not had in perspective the slavery which threatened me; added to which, was the ill treatment of the boatswain, who could not forgive my first essay with him. On the least false manœuvre or mistake, the rope's end descended on my back in a style so argumentative and

* Certainly M. Vidocq's statement, as he himself says, must be taken 'cum grano salis!'—*Translator.*

convincing, that I even regretted the cudgel of the galley-serjeant at the Bagne. I was in despair, and twenty times resolved to let fall from the maintop a wooden pulley on the head of my tormentor, or else to fling him into the sea when I was on the watch. I should certainly have done one or the other of these, if the lieutenant, who had taken a liking to me because I taught him to fence, had not in some measure alleviated my sufferings. Besides, we were forthwith going to Helvoetsluys, where the Heindrack lay, of whose crew we were to form a part, and in the passage an escape might be effected.

The day of transhipment came, and we embarked, to the number of two hundred and seventy, in a small sloop, manned by twenty-five sailors, and with twenty-five soldiers to guard us. The weakness of this detachment determined me to attempt to disarm the soldiers and compel the sailors to conduct us to Anvers. One hundred and twenty of the recruits, French and Belgians, entered into the plot, and we resolved on surprising the men on guard at the moment their comrades were at dinner, whom we could then easily secure. This enterprise was executed with the more success, as they suspected nothing. The commandant of the detachment was seized at the moment he was taking his tea, but was not at all mal-treated. A young man of Tournai, engaged as supercargo, and reduced to work as a sailor, explained to him so eloquently the motives that led to our revolt, as he called it, that he allowed himself to be conducted into the hold, with his soldiers, unresistingly. As for the sailors, they were neutral; a man of Dunkirk only, who was in our plot, took the helm.

Night came on, and I wished to lie to, lest we should encounter any guard-ship, to which the sailors would make signals; but the Dunkirker obstinately refused, and we kept on our course, and at day-break we were under the cannon of a fort near Helvoetsluys. The Dunkirker then announced his intention of land-

ing, to see if we could get on shore safely, and I saw then that we were sold; but it was impossible to recede: signals had doubtlessly been made, and, on the least movement, the guns of the fort could blow us out of water. It was compulsory then that we should await the event. Soon a boat, with twenty men on board, left the shore and approached the sloop: three officers who were in it came on deck, without testifying any fear, although it was the scene of a busy struggle between our comrades and the Dutch sentry, who wanted to free the soldiers from the hold. The first word of the eldest officer was to ask for the ringleader, and all remaining mute, I spoke in French:—"Indeed that there had been no plot, but that it was by a simultaneous movement that we had resolved on throwing off the slavery imposed on us; we had ill-treated no one, as the captain and sailors could testify, who knew it was our intention to have left them in possession of the vessel, after we had landed at Anvers." I know not what effect my harangue produced, for I was not allowed to finish it; only, whilst we were piled up in the hold, in the place of the soldiers whom we had confined there on the previous evening, I heard some one say to the pilot, "that more than one would swing at the yard-arm next morning." The sloop was then turned towards Helvoetsluys, and we reached that place the same day, at about four o'clock in the afternoon. In the roadstead was anchored the Heindrack. The commandant of the fort went in his cutter, and in an hour afterwards I was conducted thither also. I found there assembled a sort of maritime council, who questioned me as to the particulars of the mutiny, and the part I had taken in it. I asserted, as I had already done to the fort governor, that having signed no articles of engagement, I thought myself justified in effecting my escape by any means that presented.

I was then ordered to retire, to make way for the young man of Tournai, who had seized the captain.

We were looked on as the leaders in the enterprize, and we know that in such cases it is the ringleaders who undergo the punishment, and we were to suffer nothing more or less than hanging; fortunately, the young man, who had had time for consideration, corroborated my statement, and asserted firmly that no one had suggested it, but that the idea had come across us all at the same moment; besides, we were quite sure of not being betrayed by our comrades, who showed much concern for us, and swore that if we were condemned, the ship on board which they should be placed, should jump like a rocket; that is, that they would fire the powder magazine, although they should be blown up with it; and these were lads who would have dared to do what they ventured to talk about. Whether they feared the results of these menaces, and the bad example that it would afford to the sailors of the fleet, who had been recruited in a similar way; or whether the council held that we were entrenched behind a rampart of legitimate defence, in seeking to withdraw ourselves from a compulsory service; they promised to ask for our pardon from the admiral, on condition that we kept our comrades in due subordination, which appeared not to be their favorite virtue. We promised all that they desired, for nothing makes one so easy to be persuaded or to promise, as the feeling a cord about one's neck.

These preliminaries agreed upon, our comrades were transferred on board the ship, and went between decks with the crew, whose complement they were to make up: all was done with the greatest order, neither was any complaint heard, nor was there the smallest disorderly symptom to be repressed. It is right to say, that we were not ill-treated, as we had been on board the brig, where our old friend the boatswain did all with the rope's end in his hand. Besides, by giving the marines instruction in fencing, I was treated with some attention, and was even made bombardier, with a

pay of twenty-eight florins per month. Two months passed away thus, whilst the vigilance of the English cruisers would not allow of our quitting anchorage. I became reconciled to my new employment, and had no thoughts of leaving it, when news was brought that the French authorities were searching for all Frenchmen who were forming part of the Dutch crews. It was a good opportunity for those amongst us who disliked the service, and yet none cared to avail themselves of it, for they only wanted to embody us into French ships of the line, a change which presented no advantage; and besides, the greater part of my companions had, I believe, good reasons, as well as myself, not to be anxious to display themselves before the agents of the metropolis. All then were silent, and when they demanded from the captain the list of his crew, the examination of it had no other result, for the simple reason that we had all assumed false names. We thought we had weathered the storm.

Researches, however, were continued; only, instead of making inquiries, they stationed agents at the ports and taverns, who examined those men who landed by permission or otherwise. In one of my excursions, I was apprehended. I have long preserved my gratitude for it towards the ship's cook, who honored me with his personal animosity ever after, that, I had found fault with his giving us swipes for beer, and stinking cod for fresh fish. Taken before the commanding officer, I said I was a Dutchman, and my knowledge of the language sufficed for me to keep up my assertion; and besides, I demanded to be taken back to my ship with a guard, that I might procure papers to substantiate my assertion, than which nothing could be more natural. A subaltern was ordered to accompany me, and we set out in the skiff that had conveyed me ashore. On getting near the ship, I made my friend with whom I had been talking very familiarly, get up alongside first; and when I saw him entangled amongst

the rigging, I thrust off suddenly from the ship's side, calling to the boat's crew to pull their hardest, and that they should have something to drink. We were cutting through the water whilst my subaltern friend was jostled about amongst the crew, who did not or pretended not to know him. On getting ashore, I ran to conceal myself in a house which I knew, determined on quitting the vessel, in which it would be difficult for me to appear without being apprehended. My flight would confirm all suspicions raised against me, and therefore the captain gave me his authority, tacitly, to do what I might think best for my own security.

A Dunkirk privateer, the Barras, captain Fomentin, was in the roads. At this period, vessels of this kind were seldom overhauled, as they had in a measure a sort of asylum; and as it suited me to get on board it, I got a lieutenant, to whom I applied, to introduce me to Fomentin, who, on my own statement, admitted me on board as master-at-arms. Four days afterwards, the Barras set sail for a cruise in the Sound. It was at the beginning of the winter of 1799, when the tempestuous weather destroyed so many vessels on the coast of the Baltic. Scarcely were we at sea, when a northerly wind rose, quite contrary to our destination. We were compelled to put about, and the roll of the ship was so great, that I was excessively ill; so much so, that for three days I could take nothing but weak brandy and water, and half the crew were in the same state, so that a fishing-boat might have taken us without our striking a blow. At length the wind abated, and turned suddenly to the south-west; and the Barras, an admirable sailer, going ten knots an hour, all hands aboard soon recovered. At this moment, the man at the mast-head cried out, "A sail on the larboard tack!" The captain took his glass, and declared it to be an English coaster, under a neutral flag, and which the squalls had separated from the convoy.

We bore down on her, with the wind on our bow, after hoisting French colours. At the second discharge of our guns she struck, before we could board her; and, putting the crew down into the hold, we made for Bergen in Norway, where our cargo of mahogany was soon disposed of.

I remained six months on board the Barras, and my share of the prizes was pretty considerable, when we went to lay up for a time at Ostend. We have already seen that this city was always unpropitious to me; and what now happened to me almost made me a convert to fatalism. We had scarcely got into the basin, when a commissary, gendarmes, and police agents, came on board to examine the papers of the crew; and I afterwards learnt that the object of this unusual visitation was, that a murder having been committed, it was conjectured that the assassin might have taken refuge with us.

When my turn came for examination, I asserted that I was Auguste Duval, born at l'Orient; and added, that my papers were at Rotterdam, in the office of the Dutch marine department. No notice was taken, and I thought I had well got rid of the affair. When the three hundred men who were on board had been questioned, eight of us were called, and told that we must go to the register-office, to give the requisite explanation. Not liking this, I turned off at the first angle of the street, and had already gained thirty yards on the gendarmes, when an old woman, who was washing the steps of a house, put her broom between my legs and I fell. The gendarmes came up to me and put on handcuffs, besides belabouring me pretty well with the butts of carbines and the flat sides of swords, and I was conducted thus to the commissary, who, after hearing me, asked me if I had not escaped from the hospital of Quimper. I saw that I was caught, for there was equal danger as Duval or Vidocq. However, I decided on the first

name, which offered less unfavourable chances of the two; since the road from Ostend to l'Orient is longer than from Ostend to Arras, and thus afforded more opportunities and time for escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

I see Francine again—My re establishment in the prison of Douai—Am I, or am I not, Duval?—The magistrates embarrassed—I confess that I am Vidocq—Another residence at Bicetre—I find captain Labbre there—Departure for Toulon—Jossas, the famous robber—His interview with a great lady—A tempest on the Rhone—The marquis of St Armand—The executioner of the Bagne—The plunderers of the wardrobe—A family of Chauffeurs.

EIGHT days elapsed, during which I only once saw the commissary, and was then sent with a party of prisoners, deserters, &c. who were to be conveyed to Lille. It was to be expected that the uncertainty of my identity would terminate in reaching a city where I had so often dwelt; and therefore, informed that we should pass through that place, I took such precautions that the gendarmes who had already conducted me did not recognize me; my features, concealed under a thick mask of dust and sweat, were, besides, completely altered by the swelling of my cheeks, almost as large as those of the angels which on the frescoes of churches are seen blowing the trumpet of the last judgment. It was in this state that I entered the Egalité, a military prison, where I was to stay for some days, there to charm away the weariness of my seclusion. I risked several visits to the canteen, in the hope that mingling with the visitors I might find an opportunity of escape. Meeting with a sailor whom I had known on board the Barras, I thought I might make him instrumental to my project. I asked him to breakfast with me, and,

our meal finished, I returned to my chamber, where I remained for three hours, reflecting on the means of recovering my liberty, when the sailor came to ask me to share the dinner which his wife had just brought him. The sailor, then, had a wife,—and the thought crossed me, that to elude the vigilance of the jailors, she might procure me female attire or some disguise. Full of this idea, I went down to the canteen and drew near the table, when I heard a piercing cry, and a woman fainted. It was my comrade's wife. I ran to raise her—Good heavens, 'twas Francine! Alarmed at my own imprudence, which had allowed an expression of astonishment to escape from me, I tried to repress the emotion which I had unavoidably testified. Surprised and astonished, the spectators crowded round us, and overwhelmed me with enquiries; and, after some moments' silence, I told them that it was my sister, whom I had so unexpectedly met.

This incident passed without any consequences, and next day at early dawn we set off: and I was in consternation at finding that the convoy, instead of following as usual the road to Sens, took that of Douai. Why change the direction of our journey? I attributed this to some indiscretion of Francine; but I soon learnt that it resulted simply from the necessity of leaving at Arras some of the refractory prisoners from Cambrai.

Francine, whom I had so unjustly suspected, was awaiting me at our first halt. In spite of the gendarmes she would speak to and embrace me. She wept bitterly, and joined my tears with hers. With what bitterness did she reproach herself for the infidelity which was the cause of all my misfortunes! Her repentance was sincere, and I sincerely forgave her: and when, on the order of the brigadier, we were compelled to separate, she slipped into my hands two hundred francs in gold as the only recompense in her power.

At length we reached Douai, and at the gate of the

prison of the department a gendarme rang the bell. Who answered the summons? Dutilleul, the turnkey, who, after one of my attempts to escape, had dressed my hurts for a month afterwards. He did not appear to know me. At the office I found another person whom I knew, the guard Hurtrel, in such a state of inebriety that I flattered myself his memory had entirely left him. For three days nothing was said to me; but on the fourth I was led before the examining magistrate, in the presence of Hurtrel and Dutilleul, and was asked if I were not Vidocq? I replied that I was Auguste Duval, which might be confirmed by sending to l'Orient; and besides, the motive of my apprehension at Ostend proved it, as I was only charged with having deserted from a ship of war. My straight-forward tale seemed to weigh with the judge, who hesitated; but Hurtrel and Dutilleul persisted in asserting that they were not mistaken. Rausson, the public accuser, came to see me, and also said he knew me; but as I was not disconcerted, he remained in doubt, and to clear up the affair they devised a stratagem.

One morning I was told that a person wanted me at the office, and on going thither I found my mother, whom they had sent for from Arras; with what intention may be easily divined. The poor woman hastened to embrace me, but I saw through the snare, and putting her from me quietly, I said to the magistrate who was present, that it was an unmanly thing to give the unfortunate woman any hopes of seeing her son, when they were, at least, uncertain of their ability to produce him. My mother, who was put on her guard by a signal which I managed to communicate to her, pretending to examine me attentively, at length declared that a wonderful likeness had deceived her, and then retired, uttering many bitter reproaches against those who had taken her from home only to afford her but a fallacious joy.

The magistrate and turnkeys were then reduced to

their original state of dubiety, when a letter which arrived from l'Orient seemed to put the matter beyond a doubt. It mentioned a drawing pricked on the left arm of Duval, who had escaped from the hospital at Quimper, as a thing which would at once dispel every doubt as to the identity of the individual detained at Douai. I was again summoned before the examining-judge, and Hurtrel, already triumphing in his penetration, was present at the interrogation. At the first words I saw what was coming, and stripping my coat sleeve above my elbow, I showed them the drawing, which they scarcely expected to find, and which exactly coincided with the description sent from l'Orient. All were in the clouds again, and what yet made the situation more complicated, was that the authorities of l'Orient demanded me as a deserter from the fleet. Fifteen days were thus spent without any decision having been made concerning me; then tired with the severities used towards me, and hoping to procure approbation, I wrote to the president of the criminal tribunal, declaring that I was really Vidocq. I had determined on this, under the idea that I should be sent forthwith to Bicêtre with a party, and that was actually the result. It was utterly impossible, however, for me to make the least effort to escape by the way, as I was guarded with unremitting vigilance.

I made my second entry at Bicêtre on the second of April 1799, and there found some old prisoners, who, although galley-slaves, had obtained permission to have their sentence to the Bagne remitted, and it was an advantageous commutation for them, as the duration of their punishment took date from the day of their actual apprehension. These kinds of favours are occasionally granted at the present day; and if only conferred on persons whom peculiar circumstances of condemnation, or repentance, rendered worthy of it, we should give it a tacit consent; but deviations from the general principle arise ordinarily from the sort of

struggle which exists between the police of the provinces and the general police, each of which has its favourites. The convicts, however, always belonging to the general police, it can remove at will any prisoner from the Bicêtre, or other prison, to the Bagne, and this is convincing with regard to the observation I have just made. The convict, who up to this time had conducted himself with apparent piety, throws off the mask, and shows himself one of the most depraved of malefactors.

I saw at Bicêtre captain Labbre, who, it may be recollected supplied me, when at Brussels, with papers, by means of which I had deceived the baroness d'I——. He had been sentenced to sixteen years at the galleys, for being concerned in an extensive robbery committed at Ghent, at the house of Champon, the aubergiste. He was, with us, to depart with the first chain, the near approach of which was disagreeably announced to us. Captain Viez, knowing the gentlemen who were to be confided to him, had declared, that to prevent any chance of escape, he would put us on wrist-cuffs and collars until we reached Toulon. However, our promises induced him to forego this formidable project.

After the rivetting of the fetters was done (in a similar way to that in which it had been performed at my first departure) I was put at the head of the first cordon, with Jossas, one of the most celebrated robbers of Paris and the provinces, better known as the marquis de Saint-Armand de Faral, which he constantly bore. He was a man about thirty-six years old, with a gentlemanly appearance, and able to assume at will the most perfect suavity of manners. His travelling costume was that of a dandy leaving his bed-room for his boudoir. With pantaloons of silver-gray knit materials, he wore a waistcoat and cap trimmed with Astracan fur, of the same colour, and the whole covered with a large cloak lined with crimson velvet. His expenditure equalled his appearance, for not

contented with living sumptuously at the places of repose, he also supported three or four others of the cordon.

Jossas never had any education, but having entered when very young into the service of a rich colonel, whom he accompanied in his travels, he had acquired manners sufficiently good not to disgrace any circle. Thus his comrades seeing him introduce himself into the first society, named him "Passe-par-tout." He was so completely identified with this character, that at the Bagne, when confined in double irons, and mingling indiscriminately with men of the most miserable appearance, he still kept up a portion of his grandeur though disguised in a convict's cassock. Having provided himself with a splendid dressing-box, he bestowed an hour daily on his toilet, and was extremely particular about the appearance of his hands, which were certainly very handsome.

Jossas was one of those thieves, of whom, fortunately, but few are now in existence. He meditated and prepared an enterprise sometimes as long as a year beforehand. Operating principally by means of false keys, he began by taking first the impression of the lock of the outer door. The key made, he entered the first part; if stopped by another door, he took a second impression, had a second key made; and thus in the end attained his object. It may be judged, that only being able to get on during the absence of the tenant of the apartment, he must lose much time before the fitting opportunity would present itself. He only had recourse to this expedient when in despair that is, when it was impossible to introduce himself to the house; for if he could contrive to procure admittance under any pretext, he soon obtained impressions of all the locks, and when the keys were ready, he used to invite the persons to dine with him, in the Rue Chantereine, and whilst they were at table, his accomplices stripped the apartments, from whence he had also contrived to draw away the servants, either

by asking their masters to bring them to help to wait at table, or by engaging the attention of the waiting-maids and cooks by lovers who were in the plot. The porters saw nothing, because they seldom took anything but jewels or money. If by chance any large parcel was to be removed, they folded it up in dirty linen, and it was thrown out of window to an accomplice in waiting with a washerwoman's wheel-barrow.

A multitude of robberies committed by Jossas are well known, all of which bespeak that acute observation to invention which he possessed in the highest degree. In society, where he passed as a Creole of Havannah, he often met inhabitants of that place, without ever letting anything escape him which could betray him. He frequently led on families of distinction to offer him the hand of their daughters. Taking care always, during the many conversations thereon, to learn where the dowry was deposited, he invariably carried it off, and absconded at the moment appointed for signing the contract. But of all his tricks, that played off on a banker at Lyons it perhaps the most astonishing. Having acquainted himself with the ways of the house, under pretext of arranging accounts and negociations, in a short time an intimacy arose, which gave him the opportunity of getting the impression of all the locks except that of the cash chest, of which a secret ward rendered all his attempts unavailing. On the other hand, the chest being built in the wall, and cased with iron, it was impossible to think of breaking it open. The cashier, too, never parted from his key; but these obstacles did not daunt Jossas. Having formed a close intimacy with the cashier, he proposed an excursion of pleasure to Collonges; and on the day oppointed, they went in a cabriolet. On approaching Saint Rambert, they saw by the river side a woman apparently dying, and the blood spouting from her mouth and nostrils; beside her was a man, who appeared much distressed, assisting her. Jossas, testifying considerable emotion, told him that the best me-

thod of stopping the effusion of blood was to apply a key to the back of the female. But no one had a key, except the cashier, who at first offered that of his apartment. That had no effect. The cashier, alarmed at seeing the blood flow copiously, took out the key of his cash-chest which was applied with much success between the shoulders of the patient. It has been already guessed that a piece of modelling wax had been placed there previously and that the whole scene had been preconcerted. Three days after, the cash-box was empty.

As I have already stated, Jossas playing off the high and mighty, spent money with the facility of a man who comes easily by it. Besides, he was very charitable; and I could cite many instances of his whimsical generosity, which I leave to the examination of moralists. Amongst others, the following: One day he penetrated into an apartmant in the Rue du Hazard, which he had been informed would yield a rich booty. At first the wretchedness of the furniture surprised him, but the proprietor might be a miser. He went on searching, burst open all, broke everything, and only found in a desk a bundle of pawnbrokers' duplicates. He took from his pocket five louis, and placing them on the mantel-piece, wrote on the glass these words, "Payment for broken furniture;" he then retired, after closing the doors carefully, lest any other robbers, less scrupulous, should carry off what he had respected.

When Jossas set out with us for Bicêtre it was his third journey. He afterwards escaped twice, was retaken, and died at the Bagne at Rochefort in 1806.

On our way to Montereau, I was witness of a scene which may as well be known, as it may prevent a similar recurrence. A convict, named Mauger, knew a young man of the city, who was believed by his parents to be sentenced to the gallies; and recommending his next neighbour to hide his face with his handkerchief, he told several persons we met on our way,

that the persons who thus concealed himself was the young man in question. The chain went onwards, but scarcely were we a quarter of a league from Montereau, when a man, running after us, gave the captain fifty francs, produced by a collection made for the 'man with the handkerchief.' These fifty francs were in the evening distributed amongst the plotters of the scheme, without any other persons but themselves knowing the cause of such liberality.

At Sens, Jossas played another comedy. He had sent for a man, named Sergent, who kept the auberge de l'Ecu; and on his arrival, this man testified the most excessive grief. "What!" he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "you here, my noble marquis! You, the brother of my old master! I, who thought you on your return to Germany! Oh heavens! what a misfortune." It may be guessed that in some expedition, Jossas, being at Sens, had passed himself for an emigrant, returned clandestinely, and the brother of a count with whom Sergent had been cook. Jossas explained to him how, being apprehended with a forged passport at the moment he was gaining the frontier, he had been sentenced as a forger. The good aubergiste did not confine himself to empty lamentations, but sent the galley slave an excellent dinner, which I partook, with an appetite greatly contrasted with my wretched situation.

Save and except a tremendous chastisment inflicted on two convicts who had tried to escape at Beaume, nothing extraordinary occurred till we reached Châlons, when we were put on board a large boat, filled with straw, very similar to those which convey charcoal to Paris; the whole covered with a thick cloth. If, to cast a glance over the country, or breathe a purer air, a convict ventured to raise a corner, a shower of blows rained instantly on his shoulders. Although freed from such treatment, I was not the less affected at my situation; scarcely could the gaiety of Jossas, who was never downcast, avail in making me for a moment for-

get, that, on reaching the Bagne, I should be the object of a special vigilance that must frustrate every hope of escape. This idea doubly depressed me when we reached Lyons.

On seeing the Ile Baslie, Jossas said to me, "You are going to see something new." I saw, on the quay of the Seine, an elegant carriage, which seemed to be awaiting the arrival of the boat. As soon as it came in sight, a female put her head from the window, and waved a white handkerchief. "It is she," said Jossas, who replied to the signal. The boat having been moored to the quay, the lady descended, and mixed in the crowd of lookers-on; I could not see her face, which was concealed by a very thick black veil. She remained there from four in the afternoon till evening, and the crowd then dispersing, Jossas sent lieutenant Thierry to her, who soon returned with a sausage, in which were concealed fifty louis. I learnt that Jossas, having made a conquest of this lady under his title of marquis, had informed her by letter of his condemnation, which he doubtlessly accounted for as he had done with the aubergiste at Sens. These sort of intrigues, now very rare, were at this period very common, in consequence of the disorders which sprung from the revolution; an event which shook to the very centre the structure of social order and good conduct in society. Ignorant of the stratagem plotted to deceive her, the veiled lady reappeared the next day on the quay, and remained there until our departure, to the great satisfaction of Jossas, who not only was recruited in finance, but was assured of an asylum in the event of effecting his escape.

We had nearly reached the termination of our navigation, when two leagues from Pont St Esprit, we were overtaken by one of those terrific storms so common on the Rhone. It was announced by distant rumblings of thunder. Soon afterwards, the rain descended in torrents; gusts of wind, such are only experienced under the tropics, blew down houses, uprooted

trees, and drove the waves mountain high, which threatened at each moment to overwhelm us with destruction. At this moment, the spectacle that presented itself was horrific; by the rapid flashes of lightning were to be seen two hundred men, chained so as to deprive them of the remotest hope of safety, and expressing by fearful cries the anguish of approaching death, rendered inevitable by the weight of their fetters: on their sinister countenances might be read the desire to preserve a life disputed by the scaffold, a life henceforward to be spent in misery and degradation. Some of the convicts evinced an absolute passiveness, many, on the contrary, delivered themselves up to a frantic joy. If any unfortunate wretch, mindful of his innocent youth, muttered out the fragment of a prayer, his next companion would perhaps shake his fetters, whilst he howled an obscene song, and the prayer expired in the midst of lengthened howls and shrieks.

What redoubled the general consternation was, the despair of the mariners, who seemed to have given all over for lost. The guards were not more confident, and even gave symptoms of an intention to quit the boat, which was visibly filling fast with water. Then matters took a fresh turn, and they urged on the argousins, crying, "Make the shore; let all make for shore." The darkness, added to the confusion of the moment, affording an opportunity with impunity, the most intrepid of the convicts rose, declaring that no person should quit the boat until it reached the bank. Lieutenant Thierry was the only one who appeared to have preserved his presence of mind; he put on a bold front, and protested that there was no danger, as neither he nor the sailors had any intention of quitting the vessel. We believed him the more as the weather was gradually becoming more moderate. Daylight appeared, and on the surface of the waters, smooth as ice, there would have been nothing to recall the disasters of the night, if the muddy tide had not been strewn with dead cattle, trees, and fragments of furniture and houses.

Escaped from the tempest, we landed at Avignon, and were confined in the castle. There commenced the vengeance of the argousins; they had not forgotten what they were pleased to term our insurrection; refreshing our memories with it by blows from their cudgels, and then preventing the public from giving the convicts that assistance which the end of the journey prevented from passing through their hands. "Alms to these vagabonds!" said one of them, called father Lami, to some ladies who wished to bestow some aid; "it would be money lost. Besides, ask the captain."

Lieutenant Thierry, who ought not to be mentioned with such brutal and inhuman beings, and of whom I have already spoken, gave permission; but, by a refinement of villany the argousins made the signal for departure before the distribution was finished. The rest of the journey had no features of interest; and at length, after thirty-seven days of most painful travel, the chain entered Toulon.

The fifteen carriages arrived at the port, and drawn up in front of the rope-yard, the convicts were ordered to alight, and were then escorted to the court-yard of the Bagne. On the way thither, those who had clothes worth anything made all possible haste to take them off and sell or give them to the crowd which assembled at the arrival of a new chain. When the clothing of the Bagne was distributed, and the manacles had been rivetted, as I had seen it done at Brest, we were conveyed on board a cut-down frigate, called le Husard (now le Frontin) used as the floating Bagne. As soon as the 'payots' (convicts employed as writers) had written down our descriptions, the "return horses" (escaped convicts) were rivetted to the double chain. Their escape added three years additional confinement to the original sentence.

As I was thus circumstanced, I was sent to No. 3, where the most suspected convicts were placed. Lest they should find an opportunity for escaping in going

to the harbour, they never went to labour. Always fettered to the 'banc,' lying on the bare plank, eaten up by vermin, and worn out by brutal treatment and want of nourishment and exercise, they presented a most lamentable appearance.

What I have already said concerning the abuses of every kind, of which the Bagne at Brest was the theatre, precludes the necessity of making any remarks on that at Toulon. Here was the same mixture of convicts; the same inhumanity of argousins; the same pilfering of the government property; only the importance of the armaments afforded more scope for plunder to the galley-slaves, who were employed in the arsenals or magazines. Iron, lead, brass, hemp, pease, beans, oil, rum, smoked beef, and biscuit, disappeared daily; and the men easily found receivers, as the convicts had very active auxiliaries in the marines and free workmen of the dock-yard. The rigging procured by these means served to equip a multitude of boats and fishing smacks, whose owners got them very cheaply, and were borne out, in case of inquiry, by saying that they had bought them at a sale of refuse stores.

A convict of our ward, who being a prisoner in England, had worked as a carpenter in the dock-yards of Chatham and Plymouth, told us that the plunder was there very great. He assured us that in all the villages along the banks of the Thames and Medway, there were persons perpetually occupied in untwisting the cordage of the royal navy, to take out the marks and stamps put in to make it known; others were employed in effacing the 'broad arrow' stamped on all the metal materials used in the arsenals. These thefts, however considerable, are not at all comparable to the robberies on the river Thames, so very injurious to trade. Although the establishment of a river police has in great measure repressed these abuses, I think it will not be uninteresting to give some details con-

cerning the frauds exercised still in some parts at the expence of the cargoes of vessels.

The thieves here alluded to are divided into many classes, each of which has its particular province or department; they are called the river pirates (pirates de rivière); light horsemen (chevaux legers); heavy horsemen (gendarmes); game watermen (bateliers chasseurs); game lightermen (gabariers chasseurs); mud-larks (hirondelles de vase); scuffle hunters (tapageurs); and copmen (receleurs). The river pirates consist of the boldest and most desperate of the robbers who infest the Thames: they carry on their operations in the night against all vessels badly watched, and whose crews are sometimes murdered that they may the more easily pillage the vessel. More frequently they confine themselves to taking the cordage, oars, poles, and bales of merchandize. The captain of an American brig, anchored off Castlane-Ter,* hearing a noise, went on deck to look out, he saw a boat row away, and found they were pirates, who, wishing him good evening, told him that they had just raised his anchor and cable. Having an understanding with the watchmen charged with taking care of the cargoes at night, they plunder with the greatest facility. When they cannot effect such collusions, they cut the cables of the lighters and let them drift until they get to a place where they can effect their object without any fear of discovery. Small coal barges have been thus found entirely emptied during the night. Russia tallow, which from the difficulty of moving the enormous barrels containing it, would seem to be safe, is not so; for an instance has been known of the noc-

* We give M. V.'s own spelling of this word, but such a place on the banks of the Thames is not known to us, nor, we believe to any one else in London: but in reference to Colquhoun's 'Police of the Metropolis,' we find this and the following anecdotes, whence M. Vidocq must have literally copied them; and the 'Castlane Ter' is 'East Lane Tier.' So much for accuracy!—*Translator.*

turnal removal of seven of these casks, each weighing between thirty and forty hundred weight.

The light horsemen also plunder during the night, but principally those vessels coming from the West Indies. This species of robbery arises from a concerted plan between some of the crew and the receivers, who buy the scrapings, that is, the samples of sugar, the refuse of the coffee, or the drippings of the spirits, and which remain in the hold when the cargo has been discharged. It is an easy matter to encrease these by piercing the sacks, and loosening the hoops of the barrels. This, a Canadian merchant, who sent a great deal of oil annually, discovered to his great astonishment. Always finding a deficit much greater than could arise from common leakage, and unable to get, on this head, a satisfactory solution from his correspondents, he determined on making a voyage to London, to penetrate the mystery. Resolved to pursue his investigations with the most minute research, he was in the quay waiting with much impatience for a lighter laden the previous evening, and whose delay seemed very extraordinary. At length it appeared, and the merchant saw a pack of fellows of very bad appearance jump on board with as much eagerness as a crew of corsairs into a prize. He also went down into the hold, and was completely stupified on seeing the barrels placed with their bungs downwards. When they begun to unload the lighter, he found as much oil left floating in the hold as would fill nine barrels. The proprietor having had a few planks taken up, there was found as much more as filled five casks, so that the load of one lighter had made a diminution of fourteen barrels. It would be scarcely credited, that the crew, far from being ashamed of this, had the impudence to assert that they had a right to this as a profit that belonged to them.

Not content with these thefts, the light horsemen, united with the lightermen, opened, during the night, barrels of sugar, which they entirely emptied, carrying them off in black bags which they call "black straps"

(bandes noires). Some constables sent to Paris, and with whom I was associated in an affair, assured me that in one night there had been carried off from various vessels as much as twenty hogsheads of sugar, and also of rum drawn of by means of a pump, called a jigger, and which was conveyed away in bladders. The ships, on board which this traffic is carried, were called "game ships" (vaisseaux à gibier). At this period, the robberies of liquors and spirits were, besides, very common, even in the royal navy. A very remarkable instance occurred on board the Victory, which brought to England the dead body of Nelson, killed, as we know, at the battle of Trafalgar. To preserve the remains, they were put into a puncheon of rum. On reaching Plymouth, the puncheon on being opened was entirely empty and dry. During the voyage, the sailors, very certain that the purser would not visit this cask, had drank up all the rum by straw pipes, or jiggers. They called this "tapping the admiral" (mettre l'amiral en perce).

The game boatmen are on board vessels unloading their cargoes, and receive, and instantly carry off, all stolen goods. As they are the parties who treat with the receivers, they make a profitable business of it, and spend a great deal of money. I heard of one who, from the fruits of his industry, kept a very elegant woman, and a saddle horse.

By mud-larks, are meant those men who grope about on the shores at low tide, under the bottoms of vessels, pretending to look for old pieces of cord, iron, coals, &c., but in fact to receive and conceal various articles thrown over to them.

The scuffle-hunters, are workmen with long aprons, who pretend to ask for work, go in a body on ship-board, and find opportunities of 'prigging' something during the confusion.

Last of all are the receivers, who not content with buying all that the thieves bring to them, sometimes have understandings with the captain, or some of the crew, whom they find out to be not indisposed to deal

with them. These transactions are made in slang terms, intelligible only to the parties concerned. Sugar was "sand;" coffee, "beans;" pepper, "small pease;" rum, "vinegar;" tea, "hops;" so that they could deal for them even in the presence of the supercargo of the ship, whilst he was not aware that it was his cargo that was the subject of such roguery.

I found in the cell, No, 3, all the most abandoned scoundrels that ever assembled at the Bagne. I saw there one named Vidal, who even struck the convicts themselves with horror. Apprehended at fourteen years of age, in the midst of a band of brigands, whose crimes he participated, his age alone redeemed him from the scaffold. He was sentenced to imprisonment for twenty-four years; but scarcely had he reached the prison when, at the conclusion of a quarrel, he killed a comrade with a blow of his knife. A sentence of twenty-four years' hard labour, was then substituted for that of imprisonment only. He had been for some years at the Bagne, when a convict was sentenced to death. There was not an executioner to be found in the city, and Vidal eagerly offered his services, which were accepted, and the execution was carried into effect, but they were compelled to put Vidal on the bench with the galley-guards, or else the convicts would have knocked him on the head with their fetters. The threats which menaced him did not prevent him from fulfilling his new office again, some time afterwards. Besides, he undertook to administer the sentences of bastinado on the prisoners. At length, in 1794, the revolutionary tribunal having been installed at Toulon, after the taking of that town by Dugommier, Vidal was employed to carry their sentences into effect. He then thought he was liberated, but when the terror had ceased, he was remanded to the Bagne, where he was placed under a special surveillance.

On the same bench with Vidal, was the Jew Deschamps, one of the principal of the party concerned

in robbing the royal wardrobe (garde-meuble), to the details of which the convicts listened with a sinistrous pleasure. At the enumeration of the diamonds and jewels carried off, their eyes sparkled, their muscles contracted by a convulsive motion; and by the expression of their countenances, inferences might unerringly have been drawn of the first uses they would have made of their liberty. This disposition was particularly discernible in those men only convicted of petty offences, who were taunted and bantered as only having stolen objects of small value; and then, after estimating the plunder of the wardrobe, at twenty millions of francs, Deschamps, added, with an air of contempt towards a poor devil sentenced for stealing vegetables, "Ah! ah! this was cabbage."

From the moment when the robbery was perpetrated it became the subject of multiplied comments, which circumstances and agitation of mind rendered very singular. It was during the meeting of the representatives on the Sunday evening (16th of September 1792), that Roland, minister of the interior, announced the event to the tribune of the convention, complaining bitterly of the inefficient surveillance of the agents and the military guards, who had forsaken their posts, under pretext of the "severity of the cold." Some days afterwards, Thuriot, who was one of the commission charged with searching out the matter, in his turn accused the minister of carelessness, who answered drily, that he had something else to do beside watching the wardrobe. The discussion rested here, but these debates had aroused the public attention, and the sole public theme was of guilty collusions, and plots framed for robbery, of which the produce was devoted to keeping the police agents in pay; they went so far as to say, that the government had robbed itself; and what gave a consistency to such a report, was the reprieves granted on the 18th of October to some individuals condemned for this

affair, and from whom confessions were expected. However, on the 22nd of February 1797, in a report to the Conseil des Anciens, on a proposal to grant a reward of five thousand francs to a madame Corbin, who had facilitated the discovery of a great quantity of the plundered property, Thiebault declared, in the most formal manner, that this event was not the result of any political measure, and had all been incurred by the defective vigilance of the police, and by the mismanagement which pervaded every department of the administration.

At the beginning, the Moniteur had heated the imaginations of the most wary, by speaking of forty armed robbers who had been surprised in the wardrobe. The truth is, that no one was surprised; and when they first discovered the loss of "the regent," the dauphin's coral, and a vast many other jewels valued at seventeen millions of francs, for four successive nights, Deschamps, Bernard Salles, and a Portuguese Jew, named Dacosta, had in their turns entered the apartments, without any other arms than the tools requisite to extract the jewels set in the plate, which they disdained to carry off; and thus they removed with the greatest precaution the magnificent rubies which formed the eyes of the ivory fishes.

Deschamps, to whom belongs the honour of the invention, first got into the gallery by climbing a window, by means of a lamp-post, which still stands at the angle of the Rue Royale, and the place of Louis XV. Bernard Salles and Dacosta, who kept watch, were at first his only comrades; but on the third night, Benôit Naid, Philipponeau, Paumettes, Fraumont, Gay, Monton, lieutenant of the National Guard, and Durand, called 'le Turc,' a jeweller in the Rue Saint Sauveur, were added to the gang, as well as many first-rate 'cracksmen,' who had been, in a friendly way, invited to come and participate in the spoil. The rendezvous was at a billiard-room in the Rue de Rohan; and, besides, they made so little mystery of the rob-

bery, that the morning after the first booty, Paumettes, dining with some girls at a cook shop, in the Rue d'Argenteuil, threw on the table to them a handful of rose and small brilliant diamonds. The police however got no information. To detect the principal authors it was necessary that Durand, arrested for forging assignats, should confess to obtain his own pardon, and on his information "the regent" was discovered and seized at Tours, sewn up in the headdress of a woman named Lebiène, who, unable to reach England in consequence of the war, was about to sell it at Bordeaux to a Jew, known to Dacosta. They had attempted to get rid of it in Paris, but the value of the gem, estimated at twelve millions of francs, would have awakened dangerous suspicions; they had also given up the idea of cutting the stone, lest the lapidary should betray them.

The majority of the robbers were in turns apprehended, and sentenced for other offences, amongst whom were Benôit Naid, Dacosta, Bernard Salles, Fraumont, and Philipponeau; this last, arrested in London at the close of the year 1791, at the moment he was engraving a plate of assignats of 300 francs, was taken back to France, and shut up in La Force, whence he escaped by favour of the massacres of the 2d of September.

Before having been sentenced for the robbery of the wardrobe, Deschamps had been implicated in a capital affair, whence he was extricated, although so guilty, as he boasted to us, by giving details not to be doubted. He had been concerned in the double murder of the jeweller Deslong and his servant maid, committed with his accomplice, the broker Fraumont.

Deslong had an extensive business, and besides private purchases, he also bartered diamonds and pearls; and as he was known to be an honest man, he often had valuable gems entrusted to him, either to sell or unset. He also frequented auctions, where Fraumont first knew him, who was constantly at sales

to buy the ropes, altar cloths, and other pillaged church ornaments (1793) which he burnt to get the metal from the gold lace. From the custom of meeting together so frequently in business, a sort of acquaintance sprung up between the two men, which soon became a close intimacy. Deslong had no concealment with Fraumont, and consulted him in all his undertakings, informed him of the worth of all the deposits entrusted to him, and even confided to him the secret of a hiding-place in which he kept his most valuable articles.

Informed of all these particulars, and having free access at all times to Deslong's house, Fraumont conceived the project of robbing him whilst he and his wife were at the theatre, which they frequented. He wanted an accomplice to keep watch; and besides it would have been dangerous for Fraumont, whom everybody knew, to be seen on the premises on the day of the robbery. He first selected a locksmith, a fugitive convict, who made the false keys necessary for entering Deslong's house; but this man being pursued by the police, was forced to leave Paris, and he then substituted Deschamps.

On the day fixed for the perpetration of the robbery, Deslong and his wife having gone to the Theatre de la Republique, Fraumont concealed himself at a vintner's to watch for the return of the servant maid, who usually took advantage of the absence of her master and mistress to go and see her lover. Deschamps went up to the apartment, and opened the door gently with one of his false keys. What was his astonishment to see in the hall the maid servant whom he thought absent, (her sister, who was much like her, having in fact left the house a few minutes before!) At the sight of Deschamps, whose surprise made his countenance even more frightful, the girl let fall her work and shrieked. Deschamps sprang upon her, threw her down, seized her throat, and gave her five blows with a clasp knife, which he had about him, in

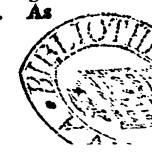
the right-hand pocket of his trowsers. The unhappy creature fell bathed in blood, and whilst the death rattle was yet sounding in her throat, the ruffian ransacked every corner of the room: but whether this unexpected event disturbed him, or that he heard some noise on the staircase, he only carried off some pieces of plate which came to hand, and returned to his accomplice at the vintner's, and told him the adventure. He (Fraumont) was much grieved, not at the murder of the servant, but at the little information and clumsiness of Deschamps, whom he reproached with not having discovered the secret closet which he had so plainly pointed out; and what put the cope-stone on his discontent was, that he foresaw that after such a catastrophe Deslong would be more careful of his property, and it would be impossible ever again to get such an opportunity.

In fact, Deslong did change his lodging after this event, which inspired him with the most excessive fright, and the few persons whose visits he allowed were received with the greatest precaution. Although Fraumont did not present himself, yet he had no suspicion of him. How could he suspect a man who, if he had perpetrated the crime, would not have failed to have ransacked the closet, of which he knew the secret? Meeting him at the end of a few days on the Place Vendôme, he pressed him strongly to come and see him, and became more intimate with him than ever. Fraumont then began plotting again; but, despairing of breaking open the new place of security, which besides was carefully guarded, he determined on changing his plan. Led to Deschamps' house, under pretence of bargaining for a large lot of diamonds, Deslong was assassinated and robbed of seventeen thousand francs, in gold and assignats, with which he had provided himself by advice of Fraumont, who dealt him the first stab.

Two days elapsed, and madame Deslong, not seeing her husband return, who never made so long an

absence without a previous intimation, and knowing that he had considerable property about him, no longer doubted but that some misfortune had befallen him. She then went to the police, the confused organization of which was then felt sensibly in every department; but, however, they contrived to get hold of Fraumont and Deschamps; and the confession of the locksmith, which corresponded with the accounts of the robbery, and who was apprehended soon after, would have had an unpropitious termination for them, had not the authorities refused to give this man the liberty they had promised to reward him with; and the police agent, Cordat, who had been the go-between, unwilling that his promises should be broken, aided his escape on the way from La Force to the Palace. This circumstance removing the only witness who could be brought forward, Deschamps and Fraumont were set at liberty.

Condemned afterwards to eighteen years' imprisonment for other robberies, Fraumont set out for the Bagne at Rochefort on the first Nivose, year eight; but he was not yet out of courage, and by means of money, produced by his plunder, he had bribed several persons who were to follow the chain to aid his escape, in case he should attempt it, or even to carry him off by force, if need should be. The use he proposed to make of his liberty was, to assassinate M. Delalande, high president of the tribunal which had condemned him, and commissary of the police of the Section de l'Unité, who had brought such overwhelming charges against him. All was ripe for the execution of this plot, when a common woman, who had learned the details from the lips of one of the accomplices, made a spontaneous confession, and measures were accordingly taken. The escort was informed of it; and when the chain left Bicêtre, Fraumont was put in extra chains, which were not removed until his arrival at Rochefort, where he was an object of special vigilance; and I was told that he died at the Bagne. As



for Deschamps, who escaped from Toulon soon after, he was apprehended at the end of three years, as concerned in a robbery committed at Anteuil, sentenced to death by the criminal tribunal of the Seine, and executed at Paris.

In cell, No. 3, I was only separated from Deschamps by a burglar named Louis Mulot, son of that Cornu who so long affrighted the people of Normandy, where his crimes are still unforgotten. Disguised as a horse-dealer, he frequented the fairs, watched the merchants who had large sums about them, and taking the cross roads, laid in wait for and assassinated them. Married, for the third time, to a young and pretty woman of Bernai, he had at first carefully concealed from her his infernal trade; but he was not slow in discovering that she was entirely worthy of him, and thenceforward she accompanied him in all his expeditions. Frequenting all the fairs as a peripatetic mercer, she easily introduced herself to the rich graziers of the valley of Auge, and more than one met his death at the appointed spot of gallant rendezvous. Often suspected, they brought forward *alibis*, always successful, and for which they were indebted to the fleetness of the excellent horses with which they were always provided.

In 1794, the Cornu family consisted of the father, mother, three sons, two daughters and their lovers, all of whom had been habituated to crime from their earliest childhood, either in keeping watch or setting fire to barns, &c. The youngest, Florentine, having at first testified some repugnance, they had cured her delicacy by compelling her to carry in her apron, for two leagues, the head of a farmer of the environs of Argentin!

At a later period, entirely devoid of any tender scruples, she had, as her lover, the assassin Capelle, executed in 1802. When the family formed itself into a band of Chauffeurs to infest the country (Caen and Falaise) it was she who put to torture the

wretched farmers, by putting a lighted candle under their armpits, or placing blazing tinder on their toes.*

Hotly pursued by the police of Caen, and particularly by that of Rouen, who had apprehended two of the juniors of the family at Brionne, Cornu resolved on retiring for some time to the vicinity of Paris, trusting thus to elude enquiry. Installed with his family in a lone house, on the road to Sevres, he did not fear to take his walks in the Champs-Elysées, where he met nearly all the robbers of his acquaintance. "Well, father Cornu," said they to him one day, "what are you about now?"—"Oh, always administering the last consolation (assassination), my sons—the last consolation."—"That is droll, father Cornu; but discovery may ensue."—"Oh! no fear where no witnesses. If I had done for all the corn-threshers (farmers) whom I have only singed, I should have nothing to funk about now."

In one of his excursions, Cornu met an old comrade, who proposed to him to break into a villa, situated in the wood of Ville d'Avray. The robbery was committed and the booty shared, but Cornu found that he had been duped. On reaching the middle of the wood, he let fall his snuff-box whilst offering it to his companion, who stooped to pick it up, and at that very instant Cornu blew out his brains with a pistol-shot, plundered him, and regained his own house, where he told the tale to his family with bursts of laughter.

Apprehended near Vernon, at the moment he was breaking into a farm, Cornu was conducted to Rouen, tried before the Criminal Court, and sentenced to death. Soon after this, his wife, who was still at liberty, came every day to bring him food and console

* Whence the name of Chauffeurs, or burners.—*Translator.*

him. "Listen," said she to him one morning, when he appeared more dejected than usual, "listen, Joseph: they say that death affrights you,—don't play the noodle, at all events, when they lead you to the scaffold. The lads of the game will laugh at you."

"Yes," said Cornu, "all that is very fine, if one's scrag was not in danger; but with Jack Ketch on one side, and the black sheep (clergyman) on the other, and the traps (gendarmes) behind, it is not quite so pleasant to be turned into food for flies."

"Joseph, Joseph, do not talk in this way; I am only a woman, you know; but I could go through it as if at a wedding, and particularly with you, old lad! Yes, I tell you again, by the word of Marguerite, I would willingly accompany you."

"Are you in earnest?" asked Cornu. "Yes, quite in earnest," sighed Marguerite. "But what are you getting up for? What are you going to do?"

"Nothing," replied Cornu; and then going to a turnkey who was in the passage, "Roch," said he to him, "send for the jailor, I want to see the public accuser."

"What!" said his wife, "the public accuser! Are you going to split (confess)? Ah, Joseph, consider what a reputation you will leave for our children!"

Cornu was silent until the magistrate arrived, and he then denounced his wife; and this unhappy woman, sentenced to death by his confessions, was executed at the same time with him. Mulot, who told me all this, never repeated the narrative without laughing till he cried. However, he thought the guillotine no subject for joking; and for a long time avoided all crimes that could send him to rejoin his father, mother, one of his brothers, and his sister Florentine, all executed at Rouen. When he spoke of them, and the end they had made, he frequently said, "This is the fruits of playing with fire; they shall never catch me at such

work:" and in fact, his tricks were not so redoubtable; he confined himself to a species of robbery in which he excelled. His eldest sister, whom he had brought to Paris, aided him in all his enterprizes. Dressed as a washerwoman, with a pannier at her back and a basket on her arm, she went to all the houses where there was no porter, and, knocking at the doors, if she learnt that the occupants were from home, she returned and told Mulot. Then he, disguised as a journeyman locksmith, went, and with his bunch of picklocks in his hand, opened with the greatest ease the most complicated locks. Frequently, that suspicion might not be aroused, in case any one should pass, his sister, with her apron and a modest cap on, and with the disturbed appearance of a nurse who had lost her key, aided his operations. Mulot, as we may see, did not want foresight, but yet was one day surprised in the very act, and soon after condemned to imprisonment.

CHAPTER XIV.

Father Mathieu—I enter on a new line of business—Ruin of my establishment—I am supposed to be paralyzed in my limbs—I am assistant major—Ecce Homo, or the psalm-seller—A disguise—Stop him! he is a fugitive convict—I am added to the double chain—The kindness of the commissary—I tell him a made-up tale—My best contrived escape—The lady of the town and the burial—I know not what—Critical situation—A band of robbers—I detect a thief—I get my dismissal—I promise secrecy.

I NEVER was so wretched as after my entry at the Bagne at Toulon. Cast at twenty-four years of age amongst the most abandoned wretches, and necessarily in contact with them, although I would have preferred a hundred times to be reduced to living in the midst of people infected with the plague,—compelled only to see and hear degraded beings, whose minds were incessantly bent on devising evil schemes, I feared the dire contagion of such vicious society. When, day and night, in my presence, they openly practised the most vile and demoralized actions, I was not so confident in the strength of my own character as not to fear that I might become but too much familiarised with such atrocious and dangerous conversation. In fact, I had resisted many dangerous temptations; but want, misery, and the thirst of liberty, will often involuntarily tempt us to a step towards crime. I had never been in any situation where it was more positively incumbent on me to attempt an escape; and henceforward all my ideas and thoughts were turned to the compassing of this measure. Various plans suggested themselves, but that was not sufficient; for to put any of them into execution I must await a favourable opportunity, and until then, patience was the only remedy for my woes. Fastened to the same bench with robbers by profession, who had already escaped several times, I was

as well as they, an object of special surveillance, which it was difficult to divert. In their cambrons (watch-boxes) at a short distance from us, the argousins were always on the look-out, and observed our least motions. Father Mathieu, their chief, had the eyes of a lynx, and such a knowledge of the men he had to deal with, that he could tell at the slightest glance if they were scheming to deceive him. This old fox was nearly sixty years of age; but having a vigorous constitution, which seemed proof against the attacks of time, he was still hale and hearty. He was one of those square figures which never wear out. I have him now in "my mind's eye," with his little tail, his grey and powdered locks, and his face in wrinkles so congruous with the business of his calling. He never spoke without mentioning his cudgel; it was a never-ending theme of pleasurable recital to talk of the many bastinadoes he had inflicted personally, or ordered to be done. Always at war with the convicts, he knew every one of their tricks. His mistrust was so excessive, that he often accused them of plotting when they were not at all thinking of it. It may be supposed that it was no easy matter to make a sop for this Cerberus. I tried however to procure his favour, an attempt in which no one had as yet succeeded: but I soon found that I had not essayed in vain; for I perceptibly gained on his good will. Father Mathieu sometimes talked to me; a sign, as the experienced told me, that I had made some way with him. I thought I might ask something from him on the strength of this, and I asked him to allow me to make children's toys with the pieces of wood brought in by the working convicts. He granted all I asked, provided I was steady; and the next day I began my work. My companions cut out roughly, and I finished the toys. Father Mathieu approved of my productions; and when he saw that I had assistance in my work, he could not forbear testifying his approbation, which he had not expressed for

a long time previously. "Well, well!" said he, "how I like people to amuse themselves; it would be well if you all did the same; it would pass time away; and, with the profits, you might purchase some small comforts." A few days afterwards, the bench was a perfect workshop, where fourteen men, equally anxious to drive away ennui and to earn a little money, worked away with much industry. We had all some goods ready, which were sold by the assistance of the convicts who gave us the materials. For a month, our trade was very brisk, and every day we had abundant returns, not a sous of which was reserved. Father Mathieu had authorized us to appoint as our treasurer a convict named Pantaragat, who sold provisions in the room in which we were. Unfortunately there are goods which cannot be multiplied without the necessary balance between produce and consumption being destroyed. This is a fact in political economy, that there is a point when the production must terminate for lack of demand. Toulon was replete with toys of every description, and we must thenceforward sit with folded arms. No longer knowing what to do, I feigned a complaint in my legs, that I might be sent to the hospital. The doctor, to whom I was recommended by father Mathieu, whose protegé I had become, actually believed that I was unable to walk. When one would attempt to escape, it is impossible to manage better than to contrive to excite such an opinion. Doctor Ferrant did not for an instant suspect me of any intent to deceive him; he was one of those disciples of Esculapius, who, like many of the Hippocrates of the school of Montpellier, whence he came, think that bluntness is a part of their profession; but still he was a humane man, and behaved very kindly to me. The chief surgeon had also a liking for me, and to me he trusted the care of his surgery chest; I scraped his lint, rolled his bandages, and made myself generally useful, so that my willingness procured for me his kindness: every one, even to the argousin of the in-

firmary, behaved well to me, although no one could exceed in sternness M. l'Homme (that was his name), whom they called, jokingly, " Ecce Homo," because he had been formerly a seller of psalms and canticles. Although I had been pointed out to him as a daring fellow, M. l'Homme was so much pleased with my good behaviour, and still more with the bottles of mulled wine which I shared with him, that he perceptibly became more humanized. When I was pretty well assured that I should not excite his suspicions, I unmasked my battery, to overpower his vigilance, as well as that of his fellow guards. I had already procured a wig and black whiskers, and had besides concealed in my mattress an old pair of boots, which, when well waxed, seemed as good as new; but that was only an equipment for my head and feet: to complete my toilet, I relied on the head surgeon, who used to lay on my bed his great coat, hat, cane, and gloves. One morning, whilst he was engaged in amputating an arm, I saw that M. l'Homme had followed him to assist in the operation, which was performed at the extremity of one of the wards: the opportunity for a disguise was admirable, and I hastened to complete it; and, in my new costume, I went straight to the door. I had to pass through a crowd of argousins, but I ventured boldly, and none of them appeared to pay any attention to me, and I already thought myself out of danger, when I heard a cry, " Stop him, stop him; a prisoner has escaped!" I was not more than twenty steps from the arsenal, and, without losing my presence of mind, I redoubled my speed, and having got to the door, I said to the guard, pointing to a person who was just entering the city, " Run with me, he has escaped from the hospital."

This would, perhaps, have saved me; but, just as I stepped over the wicket, I was seized by the wig, and, on turning round, saw M. l'Homme: resistance would have been certain death; and I therefore quietly followed him back to the Bagne, where I was put to the

double chain. It was evident that I was to undergo punishment, and to avoid it, I cast myself on my knees before the commissary, saying, "Oh, sir, do not let me be beaten; that is the only favour I ask; I would rather undergo three years' additional confinement." The commissary, however touching my petition might have been, could not keep his countenance; but told me, that he would pardon me on account of my boldness and ingenuity, on condition that I would point out the person who had procured me the disguise. "You must be aware," I replied to him, "that the people who guard us are wretches, who will do anything for money, but nothing in the world shall induce me to betray those who serve me." Pleased with my frankness, he ordered me to be released from the double chain; and when the argousin murmured at so much indulgence, he desired him to be silent, adding, "You ought to like, rather than be angry with him; for he has just given you a lesson, which you would do well to profit by." I thanked the commissary, and the next moment was conducted to the fatal bench to which I was to be fastened for the next six years. I then flattered myself with the hopes of returning to my trade of toy-making, but father Mathieu refusing me, I was compelled unwillingly to remain unemployed. Two months elapsed without any change in my circumstances, when, one night, being unable to sleep, there flashed through my brain one of those luminous ideas which only occur in darkness. Jossas was awake, and I mentioned it to him. It may be surmised that he was always intent on effecting his escape, and he thought it admirably wonderful as I had devised it, and begged me not to fail putting it into execution. It will be seen that I did not neglect his advice. One morning, the commissary of the Bagne going his rounds, passed near me, and I begged leave to speak to him in private. "What do you want?" said he. "Have you any complaint to make? Speak, my man; speak out, and I will do you justice."

Encouraged by the kindness of this language, I said, "Good sir, you see before you a second example of an honest criminal. You may perhaps remember that on coming here, I told you that I was put in my brother's place. I do not accuse him; I am even pleased at thinking he was ignorant of the crime imputed to him; but it was he, who, under my name, was condemned by the court at Douai; he escaped from the Bagne at Brest, and now, having reached England, he is free; and I, the victim of a sad mistake, must submit to punishment. Alas! how fatal to me has been our resemblance!

"Without this circumstance, I should not have been taken to Bicêtre; the keeper would not have sworn to my person. In vain have I begged for an inquiry; it is because their testimony has been received, that an identity is allowed which does not exist. But the error is consummated, and I have much to bewail! I know that it is not with you to alter a decision from which there is no appeal, but it is a favour you may grant to me: to be sure of me, I am placed in a cell with suspected men, where I am with a herd of robbers, assassins, and hardened ruffians. At every moment I tremble at the recital of crimes which have been committed, as well as at the hopes of those who are plotting others, to be perpetrated the moment, if it ever arrives, they shall get free from their fetters. Ah! I beg you, in the name of every sentiment of humanity, to leave me no longer amongst a set of such abandoned miscreants. Put me in a dungeon, load me with chains, do with me whatever you will, but do not leave me any longer with them. If I have endeavoured to escape, it has been only that I might get away from such a sink of infamy. (At this moment I turned towards the convicts.) You may see, sir, how ferociously they gaze at me; they already prepare to make me repent of what I am saying to you; they pant, they burn, to bathe their hands in

my blood: once more I conjure you, do not give me up to the vengeance of these atrocious monsters."

During this discourse, the convicts were petrified with astonishment; they could not conceive that one of their comrades would thus upbraid them in their very teeth; the commissary himself did not know what to think of such a step; he was silent, and I saw that I had touched him deeply. Then throwing myself at his feet, with tears in my eyes, I added. "Pity me; if you refuse me, if you go without removing me from this room, you shall never see me again." These words produced the desired effect. The commissary, who was a worthy man, had me unloosed in his presence and gave orders that I should be placed with the working convicts (à la fatigue). I was yoked with a man named Salesse, a Gascon, as knavish as a convict may be. The first time we were alone he asked me if I intended to escape. "I have no thoughts of it," replied I, "I am but too glad that they allow me to work. But Jossas possessed my secret, and he arranged all for my escape. I had a plain dress which I concealed under my galley clothes without the knowledge even of my yoke-fellow. A moving screw had supplied the place of the rivet in my fetters, and I was ready to start. The third day after leaving my companions I went out to labour, and presented myself before the argousin; "Get along, good-for-naught," said Father Mathieu, "it is not time." I was in the rope-room, and the place appeared propitious. I told my companion that I had a call of nature, and he pointed out some pieces of wood behind which I could go, and he was scarcely out of sight, when throwing off my red shirt, and taking out the screw, I ran towards the basin. The frigate la Meuron was then under repair, which had brought Buonaparte and his suite from Egypt. I went on board and asked for the master carpenter, whom I knew to be in the hospital. The cook, whom I accosted, took me for one

of the new crew. I was rejoiced at this, and to confirm the idea, as I knew him to be a man of Auvergne, by his accent, I began conversing with him in his own provincial dialect, and in a tone of much assurance, although I was on thorns the whole time; for forty couples of convicts were at work close to us. They might recognize me in a moment. A cargo soon set off for the town, and I jumped into the boat, when seizing an oar, I rowed away like an old sailor, and we soon reached Toulon. Anxious to reach the country I went to the Italian gate, but no one was allowed to go out without a green card given by the magistrates, and I was refused egress, and whilst I was thinking how I could get out, I heard the three reports of the cannon which announced my escape. At this moment a tremor pervaded all my limbs; already did I see myself in the power of the argousins, and all the police of the Bagne. I pictured myself in presence of the excellent commissary, whom I had so basely deceived. If I were taken I must be lost. These sad reflexions coming over me, I walked away in haste, and that I might avoid a crowd, betook myself to the ramparts.

On reaching a solitary spot, I walked very slowly like a man who not knowing whither to bend his steps, is full of consideration, when a female accosted me, and asked me in provincial French what the hour was; I told her that I did not know, and she then began talking of the weather, and concluded by asking me to accompany her home; it is only a few yards hence, she added, and no one will see us. The opportunity of finding a place of refuge was too propitious to be refused, and I followed my conductress to a sort of small inn, when I sent for some refreshment. Whilst we were conversing together, three other cannon shots were heard. "Ah!" cried the girl, with an air of satisfaction, "there is a second escape to-day." "What!" said I, "my lass, does that please you? Should not you like to get the reward?" "I, why

you cannot know much of me." "Bah, bah," I replied, "fifty francs are always worth earning, and if I swear to you that if one of these fellows fall into my clutches ——." "You are a wretch!" she said, making a gesture of indignation. "I am only a poor girl, but Celestine would never eat the bread earned by means so despicable." At these words, pronounced with an accent of truth which left no doubt on my mind of her sincerity, I did not hesitate to confide my secret to her. As soon as I had informed her that I was a convict, I cannot express how much she appeared interested in my fate. "Mon Dieu!" said she, "they are so much to be pitied; I would save them all, and have already saved many;" then, after pausing for an instant, as if to consider. "Let me manage it," she then added, "I have a lover who has a green card, I will borrow it from him and you shall use it, and, once out of the city, you can deposit it under a stone which I will point out to you, and, in the interim, as we are not in security here, I will take you to my apartment." On reaching this, she told me that she must leave me for a moment. "I must tell my lover," said she, "and will speedily return." Women are sometimes most admirable actresses, and, in spite of her kind protestations I feared some treachery. Perhaps Celestine was going to denounce me; she had not reached the street, when I ran down the staircase; "Well, well." cried the girl, "do not fear. If you mistrust me, come along with me." I thought it most prudent to watch her, and we walked away together, whither I knew not. Scarcely had we gone ten yards, when we met a funeral procession. "Follow the burial," said my protectress, "and you will escape;" and before I had time to thank her, she disappeared. The followers were numerous, and I mixed amongst the crowd of assistants, and that I might not be thought a stranger at the ceremony, I entered into a conversation with an old sailor, from whose communications I soon learnt how to utter a few well-timed remarks on

the virtues of the defunct. I was soon convinced that Celestine had not betrayed me. When I left the ramparts behind me, which it had been of such paramount importance for me to pass, I almost wept for joy; but that I might not betray myself, I still kept up a strain of suitable lamentations.

On reaching the cemetery I advanced in my turn to the edge of the grave, and after having cast a handful of earth on the coffin, I separated from the company by taking a circuitous path. I walked on for many hours without losing sight of Toulon, and about five o'clock in the evening, just as I was entering a grove of firs, I saw a man armed with a gun. As he was well clad, and had a game-bag, my first thought was that he was a huntsman; but observing the butt of a pistol projecting from his girdle, I feared that I had met with one of those provençals, who at the sound of the cannon, always scour the country in search of the runaway galley-slaves. If my fears were just, flight was unavaling; and it was perhaps best to advance rather than retreat. This I did, and on approaching him sufficiently close to be on my guard in case he should show any hostilities, I asked the road to Aix.

"Do you want the high road or the bye-way?" said he with peculiar emphasis.

"Oh either, no matter which," I answered; hoping by my indifference to remove his suspicions.

"In that case, follow this path, it leads to the station of the gendarmes; and if you do not like travelling alone, you can avail yourself of the escort."

At the word 'gendarmes' I turned pale, and the stranger perceiving the effect his words had produced, added, "Come, come; I see you are not over anxious to travel on the highway. Well, if you are not in a very great hurry, I will conduct you to the village of Pourières, which is not two leagues from Aix."

He seemed so well acquainted with the localities, that I availed myself of his offer, and consented to

follow him. Then, without stirring, he pointed out a clump of bushes, where he bid me await his joining me. Two hours passed before he finished his guard, and he then came to me—"Get up," said he. I obeyed, and when I thought myself in the thickest of the wood, I found myself at the borders of it, about fifty paces from a house, in front of which were seated several gendarmes. At the sight of their uniforms, I started. "What ails you, man," asked my guide; "do you think I would betray you? If you fear anything, take these and defend yourself;" at the same time offering me his pistols, which I refused. "Well, well;" he added, and squeezed my hand, to testify how much he was satisfied with my confidence.

Concealed by the bushes which skirted our path, we stopped. I could not comprehend the motive of a halt so near the enemy. Our stay was protracted till nightfall, when we saw approaching from Toulon a mail, escorted by four gendarmes, who were relieved by the same number from the brigade whose vicinity had so much alarmed me. The mail proceeded on its journey, and was soon out of sight. My companion then taking my arm, said in an under-tone, "Let us start, nothing can be done to-day."

We then walked away in an opposite direction for about an hour, and my guide going up to a tree, clasped the trunk in his hands, and I saw that he was counting the number of notches cut by a knife—"Good, good;" he ejaculated with an air of satisfaction, which was to me inexplicable, and taking from his game-bag a piece of bread, which he divided with me, he then gave me a bottle, whence I drank with pleasure. The collation could not have been more opportune, for I was in want of something to recruit my strength. In spite of the darkness, we walked so fast that I was tired, and my feet, long unused to exercise, had become so painful that I was going to declare it impossible for me to proceed further, when a village clock struck three. "Gently," said my guide, stooping and

placing his ear on the ground; "do as I do, and listen; with this cursed Polish legion one must be always on the watch. Did you hear nothing?" I replied that I thought I heard the footsteps of a body of men. "Yes," he added, it is they; stir not on your life, or we shall be taken." He had scarcely spoken, when a patrol guard came towards the thicket in which we were concealed. "Did you see anything, you fellows?" said some one in a low tone.—"Nothing, serjeant."

"Parbleu! I thought so; it is as dark as an oven. This devil of a Roman, whom heavens thunders crush! To make us travel all night like wolves in a wood! Ah, if ever I find him, or any of his gang!"

"Qui vive? (who goes there?)" cried a soldier suddenly.

"What do you see?" said the serjeant.—"Nothing; but I heard a breathing on this side," and he indicated the spot where we were.

"Stuff! you are dreaming. You are so much alarmed about Roman, that you think that you always have him in your cartridge-box."

Two other soldiers asserted that they had heard the same.

"Hold your tongues," replied the serjeant. "I see there is nobody, and we must once more, according to custom, return to Pourières without having trapped our game. Come, my lads, it is time to be off." The patrol seemed disposed to retreat. "It is a *ruse de guerre*," said my companion. "I know they will beat the wood and return upon us in a semi-circle."

It was now necessary that I should be firm and composed. "Are you fearful?" said my guide.

"This is no time for fear," I replied.

"Well then, follow me: here are my pistols; when I fire, do you the same, so that the four shots only sound like one report. Now, fire!"

The four shots were fired, and we then ran with all speed, without being pursued. The fear of falling into

an ambuscade had made the soldiers come to a halt, but we did not pause from our flight. On getting near an isolated hut, the stranger said to me, "It is now daylight, and we are safe:" and then leaping the pales of the garden, he took a key from the hollow trunk of a tree, and opening the door of the cot we immediately entered.

An iron lamp, placed on the mantel-piece, lighted up a plain and rustic apartment. I only observed in a corner a barrel containing, as I thought, gunpowder, and near it on a shelf was a quantity of gun-cartridges. A woman's attire placed on a chair with one of those large black hats worn by the provençal peasants, indicated the presence of a sleeping female, whose heavy breathing reached our ears. Whilst I threw a rapid glance about me, my guide produced from an old trunk a quarter of a kid, some onions, oil, and a bottle of wine: he invited me to partake of a repast, of which I felt in the greatest need. He seemed very desirous of interrogating me, but I ate with so much appetite that I believe he felt a scruple of conscience in interrupting me. When I had finished, which was not whilst anything remained on the table, he led me to a sort of loft, assuring me that I was in perfect safety, and then left me before I could ask if he was going to stay in the hut; but scarcely had I stretched myself out on the straw when a heavy sleep took possession of all my faculties.

When I awoke I judged by the height of the sun that it was two o'clock. A female peasant, doubtlessly the same whose apparel I had seen, warned by my movements, showed her head at the opening of the door of my garret—"Do not stir," said she in a provincial dialect, "the environs are full of sapins (gendarmes) who are examining every place." I did not know what she meant by 'sapins,' but I guessed that it did not refer to anything very propitious for me.

At twilight I saw my new friend of the previous evening, who, after some trifling conversation, asked me

point-blank who I was, whence I came, and whither I was going. Prepared for these unavoidable questions, I replied that I was a deserter from the ship Ocean, then in the roadstead at Toulon, that I was going to Aix, whence I hoped to get to my own country.

"That is all very good," said my host. "I see who you are; but do you know who I am?"

"I 'faith, to tell the honest truth, I first took you for a patrol; afterwards I took you for a leader of smugglers—and now I do not know what to think."

"You shall know then. In our country we are brave enough, you see, but object to be made soldiers on compulsion—so we did not comply with the requisition when we could do anything to avoid it. The quota selected in Pourières even refused to march at all when called upon. The gendarmes came to compel the refractory, and they resisted. Men were killed on both sides: and all the townsmen who participated in the affray, betook themselve to the woods to escape a court-martial. We thus met sixty in number, under the orders of M. Roman and the brothers, Bisson de Tretz: if you like to remain with us I shall be glad, for last night's experience tells me that you are a man of mould, and I advise you not to be in any fear about gendarmes. Besides, we want for nothing, and run but little risk. The country people inform us of all that passes, and give us provisions in time of need. Come, will you join us?"

I did not judge it wise to reject the proposition: and without reflecting on the consequences, I answered as he wished. I stayed two days at the hut, and on the third set out with my companion, armed with a carbine and two pistols. After many hours' walking over mountains covered with wood, we reached a hut larger than that we had quitted: it was the head-quarters of Roman. I waited a moment at the door for my guide to announce me. He soon returned, and introduced me to a large apartment, where I saw about forty persons, the greater number of whom were

grouped about a man who, by his appearance, half rustic, half citizen, might have passed for a rich country proprietor. I was presented to this personage, who said to me, "I am delighted to see you: I have heard of your coolness, and know your worth. If you will share our perils, you shall find friendship and freedom: we do not know you, but you have a face which would command friends everywhere. To sum up all, our men are honourable and brave—for probity and honour are our mottos." After this discourse, which could only be addressed to me by Roman, the brothers Bisson, and then all the troop, gave me the embrace of brotherhood.

Such was my reception in this society, to which its leader attributed a political intent; but it is certain, that after beginning, like the Chouans, to stop the diligences which conveyed the state monies, Roman had began to plunder travellers. The mutineers who composed his band had at first much reluctance in committing these robberies; but habits of an unsettled life, idleness, and especially the difficulty of returning to their homes, soon removed all scruples.

The day after my arrival, Roman appointed me to conduct six men to the environs of Saint Maximin. I did not know the purport of the mission. About midnight, on reaching the borders of a small thicket that skirted the road, we ensconced ourselves in a ravine. Roman's lieutenant, Bisson de Fretz, recommended absolute silence. The wheels of a carriage were soon heard, and it passed us. Bisson looked out cautiously, and said, "It is the Nice diligence; that will not do for us: it has more soldiers than ducats." He then ordered us to retreat, and we regained the hut: when Roman, enraged at seeing us return empty-handed, swore loudly, exclaiming, "Well, well! they shall pay for this tomorrow."

It was no longer possible for me to deceive myself as to the association to which I belonged: I had decidedly fallen in with that famous band of highwaymen

who were spreading terror throughout Provence. If I fell into the hands of justice—a fugitive galley-slave—I could hardly hope for that pardon which might be granted even to the troop with which I was mingled. Reflecting on all the difficulties of my situation, I was tempted to escape them by flight; but, so recently enrolled, how was it possible to evade the strict scrutiny with which they regarded me? On the other hand, to express any desire of withdrawing myself from the confederacy would only have provoked a suspicion fatal to my purpose or safety. Might I not be considered as a spy, and be shot as such? Death and infamy threatened me whichever way I turned. In the midst of these perplexities to which I was a prey, my only idea was to sound the man who had first effected my introduction amongst my comrades; and, with as much apparent indifference as I could assume, I enquired if it would not be possible to obtain from our captain leave of absence for a few days? The man looked at me with an air of cunning and suspicion: "Yes, friend," said he, "such favours are sometimes obtained, when our chief knows well the person to whom he grants them." This said, he turned upon his heel, and left me to rack my brain anew for some happier device to effect my liberty than this had proved.

I had now been upwards of eleven days with these bandits, each day more fully resolved to withdraw myself from the honour of their exploits, when, one night that I had fallen asleep through excessive fatigue, I was suddenly aroused by an extraordinary noise; I listened, and discovered that the confusion which had broken my rest was occasioned by one of the troop having been robbed of a purse heavy with many years' booty: to my consternation I found that, as being the last comer amongst them, their suspicions were directed to me. They surrounded me, and formally accused me of having stolen the purse; the cry was unanimously against me, and drowned my protestations of innocence; they insisted upon searching my

person. I had lain down in my clothes, which a hundred hands were ready to strip off me. What was their surprise, anger, and astonishment, at preceiving on my shoulder the brand of a galley-slave! "A galley-slave!" exclaimed the captain. "A galley-slave amongst us! He can only be here as a spy; knock him on the head, or shoot him, that will be soonest done." I heard the click of the muskets preparing to obey this last order. "One moment," exclaimed the chief; "let him, before he dies, make restitution of the lost money." "Yes," said I to him, "the money shall be restored, but on condition that you grant me a few minutes' private conversation." He consented to listen to what I had to say, under the idea that now I should make a full confession; but the moment I found myself alone with him, I protested anew that I was entirely innocent of the affair, and suggested an expedient for discovering the culprit, the idea of which was drawn from a work I had read of Berquin's. My plan was acceded to, and the captain returned to his men, holding as many straws in his hand as there were individuals present. "Observe me well," said he to them; "the longest of these straws will fall into the hands of him who is guilty."

The drawing began, each man in silence plucked out a straw; but when it had concluded, the straws were returned to the captain, and his troop looked with curious eagerness for the result.

One alone was found shorter than the others. A man named Joseph d'Osiolles presented it. "You are then the thief!" exclaimed the captain. "Every straw was of the same length; you have shortened yours, and thus criminated yourself."

Joseph was searched, and the stolen purse found hid in his belt.

My justification was complete; the whole troop acknowledged my innocence; and the captain, whilst he sought to excuse the violence to which I had been subjected, added, that I must no longer form part of his band. "It is a sad piece of ill luck for you," said

he; "but you must feel that, having been at the galleies ——" He did not complete the sentence; but, putting fifteen louis in my hands, he compelled me to promise silence as to all I had seen or heard for the next twenty-five days.

I was prudent, and faithful to my engagement.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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